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THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF GOD

AN ESSAY IN THEOLOGY

THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF GOD

AN ESSAY IN THEOLOGY

BY

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TO

J. G. T.

AND

K. R. T.

PREFACE

THIS Essay, like many other much more important things, was in process when the war broke out. It was finished at odd times afterwards, amid the new duties and anxieties that the war brought to the writer, as to countless others, and to very many of these in greater measure. It cannot be said to be written in view of new lines of reflexion suggested by the war. Nevertheless, its thesis is one that gains significance from recent events. If at the heart of the great conflict one finds a passion for power that took little or no account of moral considerations, it might be urged that the world's safety lies in exalting, with a renewed and serious enthusiasm, the moral values. But can there be any such enthusiasm without a deepening and quickening of the religious interest? May we not, in the last resort, trace the present calamities to a decline in faith? If we are justified in doing so, there is relevance in any serious effort to emphasise some aspects of the Christian

Idea of God. It is hoped that the present effort will be found to contribute in some measure to that needed emphasis.

My thanks are due to Rev. John Steele, B.D., Bellshill, for valuable help in correcting the proofs.

W. R. THOMSON.

BELLSHILL, LANARKSHIRE,
January 1919.

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CHAPTER I

THE PRESENT SITUATION

We are witnessing a decided reawakening of interest in the metaphysical side of theology. There are signs that the Ritschlian and Pragmatic halt, called in view of the distrust of the theoretical—a distrust that was itself a reaction against certain soaring speculative schemes—is being abandoned for a forward movement. The cry is no longer, "Back to Kant," but, "Forward, with Kant as a starting-point, beyond Kant." Such phrases as "theological metaphysics," "there is actual knowledge of the supersensible," "modern positive theology," "religious *a priori*," "religion as an original property of reason," are indications of the direction in which the movement is going. Häring comments on the enthusiasm that marks the movement, and welcomes the appearance of a confidence that is "very exhilarating by contrast with a *blasé* scepticism." What a recent writer[1] has called "the retirement of the Intellect" and "the retreat into subjectivity" are giving place to an emergence of confidence in the objective

[1] Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, chap. iv.

reference of the religious experience. Even along the line of feeling, it is held, there is an approach to the Real that means the breaking down of the barriers of subjectivity. Man has "feeling for Reality." It is not necessary to discuss here how far religion as mere feeling must define itself in ideas, take form and acquire outline, in order to play an effective part in life. The point of interest lies in the growing insistence on what is objectively implied in the fact of religious feeling.

The claims of "metaphysical theology" to-day are certainly much more modest than those put forth a century ago by the speculative school. There is no longer the ambition to wrest the secret from the very heart of Reality, and display by the application of a victorious dialectic the inner necessary movements of the universe. Nevertheless, there is a growing feeling that ontology can no longer be ruled out. The underlying motive is to do justice to religion. It is impossible to divest religion of the conviction that it is a commerce with the Real, without dooming it to extinction. The day is past for regarding religion as the device of priests, or the poet's or saint's refuge from the grim demands of a universe that takes no stock of man's needs. The significance of religion as a human and social fact is being ever more deeply felt. Sooner or later theology must return to the task of dealing with the validity of religious experience and of relating that experience to the other interests of life. For even if the truth of religion be granted, there cannot be a twofold truth threatening the inner unity of the spiritual life. Fruitful reflection on religious experience must tend to issue in the assurance that the

objects of faith are not there on sufferance, or that they continue by grace of a science that is either too indifferent or too indulgent to demonstrate their unreality. On the other hand, it must be recognised that while religion issues in an ethical interpretation of the universe, that interpretation is not subjective, or independent of the achievements of science. It is the more needful to insist on this to-day, since science shows signs of abandoning its agnostic attitude and advancing to ontological doctrine. One hears of an "inductive metaphysic." Theology cannot forgo its interest in this movement on the ground that theoretical knowledge has to do only with phenomena. The stake which religion has in ontological doctrine is too great to admit of such an attitude. If we are to have a revived interest in such doctrine, religious experience must share with the rest of experience in supplying the material. Above all, the personal and practical implications of religion must play a great and significant and determining part in ontological theory.

The position, then, in which theology finds itself at present may be thus indicated. It is no longer mainly concerned, as it was a generation or two ago, to defend its doctrines against Agnosticism, Naturalism, or Positivism. The banishment of the objects of religious faith to the region of the unknown or the unreal carries with it results for experience as a whole that are too serious. This does not mean, of course, that the agnostic position has been abandoned. It has recently found poignant and memorable statement in Mr Bertrand Russell's essay entitled *A Free Man's Worship*. "That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of

the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collections of atoms; that no force, no heroism, no intensity of thought or feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; . . . that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the *débris* of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built." Mr Bosanquet has described this passage as an expression of the "unhappy consciousness in the plainest form." And it is interesting to observe with what comparative equanimity he is able to survey, from the platform of Absolute Idealism, this gloomy creed, which threatens his logic with destruction and reduces his hopes to vanity. Here is the negative on which an affirmative must be built, a pessimism "on which a genuine optimism must take its stand." The one part of the confession which seems to disturb Mr Bosanquet seriously is that in which man's faith, heroism, and love are declared to be "the outcome of accidental collections of atoms." That, he holds, is not a "verifiable fact." Nothing is said of the view of the universe expounded as totally destructive of the position for which Mr Bosanquet has brilliantly contended for a lifetime. It is only hinted gently that Mr Russell ought to "interpret appearances more pregnantly." Shall we draw the conclusion that in Mr Bosanquet's view the eloquent essayist is disquieting himself in

vain? While it cannot be said, then, that what might be called the frontal attack of Positivism has been abandoned, the fact remains that the results won in the domain of the psychology and history of religion, complex and confusing as they are, have deepened the sense of the significance of religion as an inalienable factor in human life. To speak of religion as "the cradle of delusions," or religious beliefs as a "body of scruples," obstructing the free outgoing of the life force, is no longer felt to present a plane for fruitful discussion. The outcome of this manner of thinking is found in a writer like Nietzsche, in whose pages every effort to give a rational or ethical interpretation of the universe is derided, and before whose doctrine of the "Eternal Recurrence" thought and imagination alike are smitten with a paralysis from which not even the "Will to Power" of the Superman can deliver them. Theology, then, turns to those who admit the value and power of religion, and finds the issue not between affirmation or denial of its central doctrine, but rather between conflicting views as to the content and verification of that doctrine. In other words, the philosophical question that bears most directly to-day on theology, in its apologetic aspect, is that raised between Pragmatism and some form of Idealism. This may even be said to be prior to the much canvassed question as to the relation of God and the Absolute. For while it is impossible to separate the discussion of the validity of an experience from its content, to deal, *e.g.*, with the question of God's existence apart from that of His nature, the question of validity may be accorded a certain logical priority.

The Christian Idea of God

The issue as between Pragmatism and Idealism has nowhere found more summary and significant treatment than in Troeltsch's famous article entitled "Empiricism and Platonism in the Philosophy of Religion."[1] A brief consideration of the positions taken up by this representative thinker in his friendly yet searching critique of Pragmatism will help us to understand the contrast presented to theology to-day.

The question is as to the standard by which religious experience is to be judged. In religious experience we are presented with certain beliefs and convictions regarding the universe. What ground have we for lifting these, so to speak, out of the "cradle of delusions" and setting them on their feet as sane responses to a Reality with whom man in regard to his highest interests has to do? Can we say that one form of such experience is superior to another, *i.e.* that it offers us a more adequate interpretation of Reality? The answer of Pragmatism to such questions as these would seem to be that we must content ourselves with a working hypothesis as regards religion. As we study the various expressions of religion in life we do become impressed by the part it plays, and we do discriminate between the expressions. But the standard used in this discrimination is derived from the effects of religion, since no principle inherent in religion itself supplies it. It is by their fruits that we know the religions. Troeltsch, on the other hand, declares in effect that in dealing with religion we are under the constraint of reason; that religion is verily in touch with Reality; that, to put the matter more concretely, God is in religious experience, and that we discrimi-

[1] *Harvard Theological Review*, Oct. 1912, p. 401 ff.

nate between religions on the ground of the doctrine of God they present, a doctrine which may be treated both theoretically and practically.

Thus the issue between Empiricism and Platonism in the philosophy of religion is presented to us. The principle envisaged by Plato, with the eye of a poet and philosopher, and developed by Aristotle, that there is within the actual a rationally necessary element both transcendent and immanent, influenced Christian thinking for centuries, and offered a steadfast opposition to Subjectivism and Positivism alike. From Origen and Augustine down to the present the indebtedness of Christian thought to Platonism has been heavy. Even in Kant—Troeltsch reminds us—we find the fundamental thought of Platonism. For, although Kant annexes religion to ethics, "the rationally necessary law of the practical reason connects the finite spirit with reason in general." According, then, to the European type of the philosophy of religion, religion is "a necessity of consciousness" or an "*a priori* spiritual law," and is possible because a larger reason lives in the reason of man. This kernel or essence of religion may be clothed in different guises, owing to varying historical environment and individual aptitude. Yet reason discovers order in the whole process. There is a progressive realising of the divine idea. In man's consciousness there is a mingling of the necessary and the contingent, but Platonism "firmly anchors the individual consciousness in the holding ground of consciousness in general." The great problem, of course, is as to the relation of the necessary and the contingent, the infinite and finite, in consciousness. Troeltsch holds that this problem is insoluble. To declare it insoluble

is to abandon metaphysics, while in pantheistic Monism of the Hegelian type the contingent is "absorbed" by the "immanent rational necessity."

To this whole trend of thinking, Pragmatism, as expounded by James, offers a sharp contrast. For James the philosophy of religion becomes the psychology of religion. The facts are confronted, but no *a priori* rational element is discovered in them. Yet James's aim is to find a standard, a means of testing the validity of religious experience. How is this attained? Entirely in the domain of practice. We ask how this or that type of religion furthers the interests of life, how it augments life's sense of worth and gives it harmony. If it be asked by what right we speak of any belief enhancing the value of life, the answer is that we can only do so provisionally and by virtue of certain hypotheses we have been led to form as to what does actually contribute to the fullness of life. We are presented with the broad, ever-flowing stream of experience. The mind selects certain facts from the presentation, and attaches to them a certain value. But it does so at its own risk. It cannot plead any constraint of reason. For James, then, while a certain objective confirmation of a religious experience may be gained by its successful working, there is no appeal to a larger reason immanent in man's consciousness in order to test the validity of religion. We have "varieties of religious experience," but no progressive realising of a divine idea. The idea of value for life takes the place of truth or validity.

Yet, as Troeltsch points out, James cannot escape raising the question of ontology. The type of piety to which, on pragmatic grounds, he assigns special

value is "the individual redemptive type found in Protestantism." But nothing distinguishes that type more than its faith in God. What, then, of the objective reference of that faith? Shall we say that it bears tribute to the presence of the divine in man's spirit; that, as James says, as the idea of an object refers us to the object, so the idea of God witnesses to His presence and action in life? It is at this point that James gives us his famous doctrine of the subliminal consciousness. There is no point in the daylight consciousness of man, so to speak, at which we can say the divine enters life, no door of ingress in the structure of life, as that rears itself in the light for our observation. We must seek below the threshold, in the dungeon of the house of life, if we would discover the domain of the divine action. James calls this, significantly, an "over-belief." It cannot be verified. But the belief in a personal, redemptive God attests its superiority to Monism and Absolutism. It enables us to feel at home in a universe which is not a "block" universe; it gives man a sense of vital intercourse with God, and meets more thoroughly the demands of life. Troeltsch's comment on this doctrine of the subliminal is that it evacuates the thought of God of all inner unity and definiteness. This greater world that announces its continuity with man's in the dark region beneath the threshold may be a world of many gods. Thus, if we decide for Theism, it is not because of any inherent constraint in the doctrine. The choice may be even something of an idiosyncrasy.

Troeltsch freely grants that in certain respects Pragmatism and Platonism are in accord. Both react against dogma. Both adopt "a personal

religious attitude," and, instead of seeking to set up some abstract "pure religion," aim at presenting a solid foundation and justification for the religious life in general. Both tend to find the highest expression of religion in "an individualised and spiritualised Protestantism." Nevertheless, the contrast abides, and Troeltsch ranges himself in the Platonic succession. His conviction is that to have a doctrine of ethical values we must have the idea of an "element unqualifiedly valid," and issuing "from the nature of consciousness." Usefulness cannot be put in place of truth. And God must be present in clear consciousness. The relation of religious experience to an Absolute, to an adequate ground and meaning and end of things, is indispensable. We cannot dispense with the idea of "logical validity."

Troeltsch is able to cite words of James that seem to yield this point. James speaks of religion as "a reaction on the cosmos, on the universe." Further, when a man finds in religion "the root of happiness in the absolute and everlasting," that man is in relation "to the first and last word of truth," to "the most primal and enveloping and deeply true." These, Troeltsch holds, are not Pragmatic but Platonic utterances. They are not justified by a "psychological positivism." Indeed, taken strictly, they "shatter James's whole theory." There is one point, however, and it is of great importance, at which Troeltsch finds that even a philosophy of the Platonic type may be in accord with Pragmatism—that is, in regard to the criticism of certain theories of the Absolute. No part of James's work is better known than the unceasing polemic he directed

against these theories. The Absolute is "the great de-realiser of the only life we are at home in."[1] When the Absolute is not merely a name for our right to "drop the strenuous mood and take a moral holiday," it "introduces all those tremendous irrationalities into the universe which a frankly pluralistic Theism escapes."[2] Now, this is very much the line of thought taken by Troeltsch in arguing for "prophetic Christian Theism" as against Monism. Yet there is a significant difference. Troeltsch does not in opposing Absolutism abandon the Platonic standpoint. He has to find himself in harmony with James's negative polemic "without transgressing the limits of transcendentalism," and it is just here that we come on the situation so extraordinarily interesting for present-day theology. In the heat of conflict it has often seemed as if there were no escape from a Monism in which all ethical values finally disappeared, save by way of a Pluralism in which the sovereignty of the divine was surrendered. Troeltsch feels that reason bars the way. Still, the difficulty of incorporating "the element of relative correctness in James's philosophy of religion into the structure of the transcendental" is greater to-day than in the past. The immediate task, therefore, is "to adopt into Platonism the element of truth that Pragmatism holds."

This is really the immemorial problem of the One and the Many. "Show me a man," said Plato, "able to see both the One and the Many in nature, and I will follow in his footsteps as if he were a god." It is the problem with which Ward[3] deals in his

[1] *Pluralistic Universe*, p. 49. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 116.
[3] *Realm of Ends*, p. 435.

search for "the transcendental upper limit" to which Pluralism points. "Does Pluralism naturally suggest some end beyond itself, and presuppose something as the ground of itself?" And again, "We approach Theism as promising to complete Pluralism, not as threatening to abolish it, as providing theoretically more unity in the ground of the world and practically a higher and fuller unity in its meaning and end." It is the problem of relating the contingent, the casual, what seems to us in darker moments the wasteful and tragic, to some abiding principle, to discern "at its silent work in human affairs a power, self-consciously eternal, actively communicating its own scope to the feeble deeds, the painful acquirements, the values, the loves and hopes of men."[1] For Troeltsch, this "has always formed and still forms the chief problem of speculation." He does not present himself as the favoured seer for whom Plato longed. But he is emphatic in holding that we cannot rest satisfied with the spectacle and burden of contingency. Nevertheless, we have to bear the burden as part of the discipline and destiny of men who must walk by faith. There is no escape by way of a Monism either of the Naturalistic or Idealistic type, nor yet in a Pluralism which cannot find a door of entrance for the One. Both spell ruin for religion. It is Troeltsch's view that when James sought to do justice to religion by admitting the One into life, through the dark corridors of the subconscious, he was "constrained to interfuse Platonic elements in his general view." The task of philosophy is to rescue the One from abstraction, to put "more of living reality" into the "abstractions of

[1] Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 534.

the transcendental method." The task of theology is the more concrete one of working towards a doctrine of a living God, who is the ground and meaning of a free world.

As has been indicated, Troeltsch's "chief problem of speculation" presents itself to us in Ward's *Realm of Ends* as the problem of finding a Unity in which the Many shall not be "absorbed." This is also theology's problem. In working out its doctrine of God it has to face a "pluralistic universe," in which the aspect of contingency assumes the darker shade of evil and sin. Ward is at one with Troeltsch when he says that the transcendent upper limit to which Pluralism points is one "to which knowledge cannot attain." But this does not mean a despair of knowledge, and a falling back on an arbitrary choice of values. On the contrary, we are led "both on theoretical and practical grounds to conceive a more fundamental standpoint than the Many." This would seem to be Mr Balfour's [1] position when he protests against the idea of a "departmental Deity" and charges Kantianism with a procedure "singularly artificial" in excluding God from the "critique which deals with ordinary knowledge." Mr Balfour declares his inability to accept "any form of Theism which does not sustain in every part the full circle of man's human interests." For him, the inference from knowledge is as powerful, convincing, and necessary as that from goodness or beauty. It is the position also of the late Professor Fraser as defined in the *Biographia*. "I gradually came to think of this theistic faith, not as an infinite conclusion empirically found in finite facts, but as the

[1] *Theism and Humanism*, p. 248.

necessary presupposition of all human conclusions about everything." Fraser attached the greatest importance to the moral argument, and had a close affinity to Kant. But he did not "treat the intellectual and moral as two non-communicating spheres." Faith was "the larger reason."[1] The phrase "larger reason" may well describe Ward's attitude. His Unity is the God of Theism regarded as Spirit, "as possessing intelligence and will and so as personal." For such a Theism God may be said to be the Absolute in a greater sense than that in which some forms of Idealism present Him. As Kaftan[2] remarks, every spiritual religion claims absoluteness for its God, since it finds in Him the "absolute end of human striving and the absolute power over reality." It is not claimed for such a Theism that its theoretical difficulties are light. The mystery of creation confronts it, and of God's relation to the world and human life. It is a cardinal contention of Ward's[3] that we must accept evolution, not in the sense of an unfolding, but as "epigenesis"—a truly creative evolution. "Theism in our day professes to accept the evolution hypothesis, but hardly as Pluralism interprets it; not as epigenesis or creative synthesis, but rather as the literal unfolding of a plan completely specified in every detail." "'Unless creators are created, nothing is created.'" But it might be urged that if we are led "both on theoretical and practical grounds" to a Unity that is spiritual, intelligent, and personal, then the distinction on which Ward

[1] See Pringle-Pattison's article in *Mind*, July 1915, p. 326.
[2] *Dogmatik*, p. 161.
[3] *Realm of Ends*, p. 437.

lays so much stress between evolution as an unfolding and as creative synthesis loses its significance. For the "epigenesis" may be just as truly described as an "unfolding," and the "creation of creators" be held to be implicit in the thought and will of a God who is Himself a Creator, and who, in creating the world, limits Himself by an act that can only be defined as self-determination. Ward fears a doctrine of Absolutism or of Divine Sovereignty that would reduce freedom and progress to illusion. Theology must share that fear. But is not the fear groundless if the category of personality be exalted as our highest principle of interpretation? Ward[1] says that if "we start from the One conceived as Absolute, the necessitarian position would be unavoidable." But may it not be said that if we start from the One conceived as Absolute Personality, freedom is unavoidable? The relation of God to the world, as Ward seeks to conceive it, is thus set forth: "All is not decreed; the total possibilities, however far back we go, are fixed; but within these, however far forward we go, contingencies are open." One is reminded of Shakespeare's "The fated sky gives us free scope." There is freedom within the bounds of a law that is itself the expression of reason. It will be found, we believe, that what separates Ward from Absolutism even more than his starting-point and his method is his doctrine of God. It is the thought of God as spiritual and personal that determines at every point—whether the emphasis be on the theoretical or the practical—his antagonism to Absolutist doctrine. "The total possibilities, however far back we go, are fixed."

[1] *Realm of Ends*, p. 438.

That is equivalent to saying that the universe is rational, that man does not dwell on the edge of chaos while cherishing during his brief day certain vain thoughts of purpose and progress. "All is not decreed." But if God be as a Theism such as Ward's depicts Him, then one might as truly say that "All is decreed." For the decrees of such a God are neither burdensome nor grievous. They are not restrictions upon liberty. They are rather the charter of man's freedom.

The universe as a "realm of ends," says Ward, is the "absolutely absolute." That is a doctrine that theology may well accept. For it carries with it, as Ward declares when he stands on the height of his argument, the recognition of Love as the supreme value. Love, writes Bosanquet,[1] "is the best thing, in a sense the only thing, in the world." "But love is free; in a ready-made world it could have no place." True; yet even a world in the making, in which we have the "painful discipline of evolution" conceived as epigenesis, may, from another point of view, be regarded as a "ready-made" world—though the term is not perhaps the happiest. For, remembering that "the total possibilities are fixed," it is a world that cannot break the bounds of its highest law. Thus, writers like Ward and Bosanquet are not so far away from each other as perhaps might sometimes appear to be the case. When Ward[2] speaks of the "great secret" of the universe as "dying to live," and of the Incarnation as "the great mystery," one is reminded of an impressive testimony to the truth of vicarious atone-

[1] *Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. 327.
[2] *Realm of Ends*, p. 453.

ment in *The Value and Destiny of the Individual.* Both writers exalt Love to the supreme place. But Love is the supremely personal value. It is an empty word apart from that category of personality in which man lives and moves and has his being, and through which he must seek his deepest insight into reality. It presents to us the level on which the Christian doctrine of God must be displayed.

Appendix to Chapter I

It may seem idle to speak of a situation in theology at a time like the present, when the world conflict absorbs all attention and obliterates all other interests.[1] Yet, if it be true—as so many of our wisest have told us—that beneath the shock of arms there may be discerned an antagonism of ideas and ideals, then what may be called the general spiritual situation acquires immense significance, and of that the theological or philosophical aspect cannot be ignored. The ideas of the thinker emerge sooner or later from the study, and are found in the street and the market-place. What is heard in a whisper is proclaimed on the house-tops. An Aristotle may accord pre-eminence to the life of theory, and may even reach the height of his speculation in the thought of a Divine Mind rapt in ineffable contemplation of its own perfections. But he does not abandon the conviction that it is the task of reason—in Plato's phrase—to "persuade reality," to master, if possible, the hard facts of life, and to hold with firm hand the reins that curb and guide the steeds of sense.

[1] Written in 1915.

Ideas have hands and feet. They may even grasp the weapons of war and march forth in battle array.

Not only, then, from the point of view of the present study, but on general grounds, the theological situation invites attention. And it is hardly too much to say that, when we try to get to the heart of that situation, theology is found busily engaged with the doctrine of God. It is true, of course, that a vast amount of philological, historical, and critical work is being done that has no specific reference to that problem. Nevertheless, the presence of the problem may always be felt. The most detached, unimpassioned, scientific, objective treatment of the phenomena of man's spiritual history and life leads inevitably to some sort of evaluating of the facts, and some judgment on their significance. Thus, a James, "Radical Empiricist" though he be, cannot hide his main interest, which is religious. All roads lead to the Rome of the ultimate problem.

All studies, even of the most "radical" and "empirical" sort, are, in a sense, preparatory to the facing of that problem. They are all "tackings to the common port, to that ultimate *Weltanschauung* of maximum subjective as well as objective richness, which, whatever its other properties may be, will, at any rate, wear the theistic form."[1] And the work of the *Religionsgeschichtliche* school in Germany sooner or later demands its Troeltsch, its systematic theologian, to relate its vast scientific output, first of all to Christianity as an historical fact among other facts, and then to the specific contribution that Christianity has made to the spiritual life of the world. From purely objective science we are brought

[1] James, *Will to Believe*, p. 128.

to Dogmatics, to science as it can be appropriated by theology, and as it bears on "the present affirmation of the religious life," on the "affirmation of the Christian thought world," and on religion as the "revelation of deepest truth."[1] In whatever direction, then, we turn, we find ourselves confronted by this abiding interest. The philosopher and the theologian, each in his own way, has to acknowledge its constraint. "The discussion of the idea of God," says Eucken, "belongs to the summit of our investigation." "Theological dogmas," remarks Höffding, "are problems of philosophy, and it suffices to think on the concept of God . . . in order to see that it contains the greatest problem of all, namely, whether the ultimate foundation of value and good can be identified with the ultimate foundation of the reality which experience displays to us. We have no right to put this problem away."[2] And Varisco, the Italian thinker, commenting on some criticisms that had been offered on his treatment of "the Great Problems," concludes with this observation, "They" (*i.e.* the Great Problems) "all bring us back in the end to one single problem—the problem of the personality of God."[3] In answer to a question raised in a Jesuit journal, Bergson has recently declared that his philosophy leads "to the idea of a creative and free God"; while Külpe, at the close of a survey of recent philosophy —a survey, he holds, calculated to induce pessimism on account of the "anarchic" state into which philosophy has fallen—finds ground for hope in a reviving confidence in

[1] "Dogmatics of 'Religions Geschichtliche Schule,'" *Amer. Journ. of Theology*, July 1913, pp. 1–21.
[2] *Modern Philosophers*, p. 300.
[3] *Philosophy of the Present*, p. 281.

metaphysics and in indications of a fresh impulse to take up its age-long tasks. "On the threshold of the philosophy of the future stands the problem of reality." "The problem of reality." It is the philosopher's more general and abstract phrase for what theology knows as the problem of God. "Manifestly our subject is God in His relation to the world" (Häring). It is the problem that presents in every age its unavoidable challenge to the faith and intelligence of men.

An instructive confirmation of what has been said is supplied by a recent movement in Continental thought known as the "Theocentric Theology" (*Theozentrische Theologie*), the aims of which have been set forth with vigour by Professor Schäder [1] of Kiel. Theology is summoned from the outposts to undertake afresh the treatment and defence of its central theme. God must again come to be the "central point of thought, desire, aspiration." "The fact of the living God" [2] must be set more prominently at the centre of theology and religion "than was the case in the main forms of theology during the nineteenth century." For theology has to do with God, and all its lines of study, whether directed to nature or history or to the problems of the individual life, converge upon Him. On whatever aspect of reality it concentrates its gaze, the main interest is sooner or later disclosed. God is the compelling object and end of all its search for truth. The time has therefore come for a fresh "theological orientation." The life of the modern

[1] See Schäder's article in *Constructive Review*, vol. iii., No. 9, p. 39.

[2] *Theozentrische Theologie*, p. 1. "Mit Gott hat es Theologie zu thun: immer und über-all mit Gott."

world must determine afresh its attitude to God and the Christian revelation, and if theology is to become a loyal interpreter of this life in its deeper strivings, it "must become theocentric."

The Theocentric movement has been criticised on the ground that, in its anxiety to give the thought of God the central and dominating place in theology, it undervalues or even neglects the human side of religion. This seems to be the difficulty felt by Häring.[1] It is taken for granted, he holds, that religious experience is an experience of the living God; but we are not therefore freed from the necessity of examining the experience, *e.g.* in the psychology of religion. The point of the objection seems to be that in the new movement we have a species of mysticism, in which the thought of God as the All may tend to obscure and endanger the ethical values. But this, it is held, is a misapprehension. The Theocentric theology lays the greatest stress on faith. If it is mystical, it is with the sane and solid mysticism of Paul. Faith is at once the finest product of one's personality and the creation and inspiration of God. It is, so to speak, what God can create with the unique material that a personal life supplies. The governing conviction of faith, it is held, is that we are here for God's service and honour. Faith is not the faculty by which we bring God into our ken; it is rather the force by which God keeps a life moving in its orbit.

A theology is revealed by its criticisms. In dealing with other attitudes it defines its own. Thus, the relation of the Theocentric movement to other well-known movements is instructive. Schäder

[1] *The Christian Faith*, p. 131.

deals with the Erlangen school, the Ritschlian, and the "Religious-Historical." The Erlangen theology, associated with the name of Frank, is pronounced defective on account of its anthropocentric character. It begins with the new life of Christian experience, and, by a method analogous to that of the cosmological argument in regard to the "proofs," would go back to God as cause of this new life. Schäder's strictures concerning this procedure have to do both with the method and the results. The method is that of "logical inference," and the result can only be a "diminished God," a doctrine of God that falls short of "the height of His revelation."

The criticism of the Ritschlian position is of more general interest. The Ritschlians discard the method of logical inference or speculation, and would reach reality by way of "values." Schäder attacks this "theology of valuations" on the ground that underlying it there is a deep scepticism.[1] If Erlangen theology "diminished" God, Ritschlian, he holds, "degrades" God by making Him subservient to our purposes. The aim of religion, according to the Ritschlians, is to lift men above the limitations and tyranny of the world, and give them a sense of their worth and freedom. Schäder would reject this view as mere religious Pragmatism. We do not postulate a God to secure certain moral interests: rather, faith is a "surrender to God, obedience to God, and fear of God." We need not discuss at present how far this criticism of Ritschlianism is justified, or how far the idea of value is set forth by many Ritschlian writers as meeting all the needs that a doctrine of God ought to satisfy. It is

[1] *Cf. The Christian Faith*, p. 132.

the fact of such a protest against "Ego-centric" theology being made that is of significance. It is symptomatic of a reaction against subjectivism which has been an outstanding feature of much recent theology.

The same reaction is observed in Schäder's comments on the Religious-Historical school. This movement has, as Schäder grants, "so many facets" that summary statements are bound to be inadequate. The Religious-Historical method, as Troeltsch has shown, may be associated with varying constructive movements in theology. Considered strictly as a method it may not carry us beyond the psychology and history of religion. But the "deeper spirits" of the movement—to use Häring's phrase—would adopt a "more profound attitude," and would build a philosophy of religion on the basis of their scientific work. They feel the need for a "religious metaphysic." The results attained are far from satisfying to Schäder. Especially is this the case in the sphere of Christology. Jesus is left amid the relativism of history. He is a chief factor, perhaps the supreme factor, in the evolution of religion; he is not the "unique revelation of God in history." History is the record of man's search for God rather than of God finding man through His revelation. Schäder therefore finds the theology of the present characterised by certain reservations that tend to limit the objective reference of religion. The Theocentric theology would seek to remove these. It would find its chief task in proving "an objective revelation of God in nature and history and supremely in Christ, a revelation which, of course, can never be made our own without the medium of faith, but which, as the

basis or condition of religion, is something other than religion itself." Above all, it would lay stress on the commanding majesty of God. The conviction that there is such a God, a Personal Power ruling the world and commanding our faith and service, is neither the outcome of a process of reasoning nor a postulate. It is wrought in us by the spirit of God. It is the work of a revelation to which Scripture, nature, history, and Christ make their contribution. So the discredited term "Natural theology" may be rehabilitated; we may speak of historical theology and read the message of both in the light of Christology. Schäder will not rule the theoretic element out of theology. This becomes evident in his defining of his relation to Kant. He accepts unreservedly the primacy accorded by Kant to the practical reason, as a finding that no theology can now question; but, on the other hand, he denies that whatever is brought within the sphere of man's knowledge is by that very fact reduced to the phenomenal. Knowledge is not a veil that hides reality; there is a kinship between man and the world in which he lives. While the Theocentric theology, therefore, would follow Kant in questioning the validity of the "proofs" and emphasising the practical interest, it would affirm that the revelation wrought by God's spirit in man, the response to which is faith, relates itself not only to the will but to the whole man, intelligent, imaginative, and emotional, through nature and history, and above all in Christ.

CHAPTER II

THE THREEFOLD CORD

One of the most recent writers on our subject observes that the Christian idea of God "unites in itself three main elements. The first is Personality, the second is Absoluteness, the third is the possession by the Absolute Personality of the character and purpose revealed in Christ." It is pointed out further that "belief in a personal God is the inheritance of Christianity from Israel; the identification of this God with the Ultimate of philosophy, while foreshadowed by the prophetic writings, is, in its fullness, the result of contact with Greek thought; the belief that the character and purpose of God are Christ-like is the direct result of God's revelation in Jesus." These three elements are "necessary to the complete Christian conception."[1] Here we have a clear indication of the task of theology in setting forth its doctrine of God, and in bringing out what is implicit in Christian faith. It would present the doctrine of God as satisfying the practical, emotional, and theoretic needs of man. In the Christian confession of God as the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, faith recognises One to whose will man must bow, to whom his heart may go forth in love,

[1] Adams Brown, *Christian Theology in Outline*, p. 82.

and the thought of whom gives light on the meaning of life. God as Personal, as the God who is Love, as the Reason that gives order and meaning to the universe, is the object of Christian faith and the affirmation of Christian doctrine. The human interests that assert themselves on the lower levels of religion, at the stage of "primitive culture," are present in increased strength when religion reaches the height of Christianity. A recent writer on anthropology[1] would divide religion into two classes, the "mechanical and ineffective" and the "spiritual and effective." The former "offers its consolations in the shape of a set of instruments. The 'virtue' resides in certain rites and ceremonies." On the other hand, "the spiritual kind of religion . . . tends to read will and personality into the wonder-working powers that it summons to man's aid. The will and personality of the worshippers are in need not so much of implements as of more will and personality." Further, religion "works through the imagination," and, still further, "the more or less inarticulate forces of the mind need to be supplemented by the power of articulate reasoning." Thus we find the threefold demand in religion whenever it rises above the mechanical level and becomes a force whose end is "vital betterment." As religion becomes more "spiritual and effective," it demands "more will and personality."

It is this demand for "more personality" that raises the chief speculative difficulty that theology has to face. Is it a demand that at a certain stage theology has to forgo, in view of insuperable obstacles in the way of harmonising the thought of

[1] Marett, *Anthropology*, p. 234.

personality with that of absoluteness? Or may it be pressed legitimately in the interest both of religion and reason? Must it not be claimed that the transcendent which is involved in all religious experience, and with which, in the higher forms of that experience, man finds himself to be in communion, is also the ground of reality? Before dealing with this it is of interest to note with what confidence theology puts forward this claim. Thus, *e.g.*, Häring writes,[1] "God therefore is love, and to express this truth in detail is, rightly considered, the whole task of the Christian doctrine of God." But he adds, "At the same time this love of God must be reconciled with the idea of the Absolute and also with that of the Personality of God." So Kaftan,[2] after opening his discussion of the Christian doctrine of God with a section on the "Revelation of God," in which the Biblical material is dealt with, puts in the foreground the claim that the God of Christian faith is the Absolute. In the God who is Supramundane, Spiritual Personality (*überweltlicher persönlicher Geist*), who, as the God of revelation, is immanent, and whose essential attributes are Love, Holiness, and Omnipotence, Christian faith finds its highest explanation of the world and human life. God is the absolute end of all human striving and the absolute power over all reality. It is true that Kaftan, in making use of the term "absolute" in regard to God, is careful to explain that theology is not thereby venturing on a judgment as to what God is, apart from His revelation and relation to men. The affirmation is intended to express rather

[1] *The Christian Faith*, p. 322.
[2] *Dogmatik*, p. 161.

the position which the knowledge of God holds in the spiritual life. It is an affirmation issuing from the personal life and the practical interest rather than the result of a speculative process. This would seem to make the statement that God is the Absolute a "judgment of value," in the sense in which such a judgment is suspect in certain quarters. But even if we describe the affirmation as a postulate it is not unaffected by reason. The "inner logic" of faith leads to the assertion that the highest good is at the same time the highest power. It is because the denial of this threatens the rationality of the world that its assertion is not a mere "postulate," in the sense of being a declaration made in a "practical" interest that is supposed to stand in isolation from the other interests of life, but a judgment possessed of theoretic value. The demand is, in Kaftan's words, that "the real existing world must be of such a nature that the chief good can be realised." "The highest knowledge has to be ascertained on the basis of the chief good."[1] This highest knowledge, which Kaftan otherwise defines as "the knowledge of reason" as distinguished from the "knowledge of understanding,"[2] has as its principle an idea of the chief good. Indeed, Kaftan declares that the impulse towards the Absolute is "rooted in will and feeling." It is really the religious interest that sends men forth on the speculative way. For the object of their quest is blessedness, a blessedness that is believed to reside in knowledge. "The craving for a knowledge of 'Things in themselves' . . . is simply nothing but

[1] *Truth of Christian Religion*, vol. ii. p. 224.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 293.

the practical (religious) need of an eternal and unchangeable reality, a reality in which a perfect satisfaction of the will is to be found." And even Ritschl,[1] while rejecting the cosmological and teleological arguments as failing to show "God's worth for men, and in particular His worth for sinners," nevertheless holds that the Christian view of God "enables us comprehensively to unify our knowledge of nature and the spiritual life of man in a way which otherwise is impossible. In the moral argument we have a *ratio cognoscendi* of the validity of the Christian idea of God when employed on the solution of the enigmas of the world." And in a note he remarks, not without sharpness, that those who accuse him of making religion an "appendix to morals" would be better to acquire "a thorough knowledge of the elementary distinction between the *ratio essendi* and the *ratio cognoscendi* instead of sitting in judgment" on him.

It seems clear, then, that even in theology of the Ritschlian type the Christian affirmation of God carries with it theoretic implications. Knowledge is not simply confined to phenomena in the Kantian sense of the word, *i.e.* taking phenomena as blocking the way to reality. Rather, under Lotze's influence, the phenomenon is to be regarded as a revelation of the real, and in the experience in which it has a place the mind has commerce with the real. If stress is laid on the practical, it is the Practical *Reason* that is emphasised. Nothing but confusion can result from setting the practical and theoretic interests in abstract opposition. An element in man's need of God is the need of unity. And this

[1] *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 226.

is not a purely theoretic demand. "We could not live without an Absolute," declares a recent writer.[1] "I do not say that the Absolute is equivalent to God. But I do say that God, whatever else He may be, must needs be the Absolute. Thus, accepting fully the pragmatic guide to truth, we conclude that the only satisfying truth must be absolute, *i.e.* non-pragmatic. Wherewith Pragmatism ends in consuming itself." This is practically Kaftan's position that the need for the Absolute is rooted in will and feeling. It means that no judgment as to the values of life can escape the reference to truth. If religion be taken, according to Höffding's striking phrase, as a "belief in the conservation of values," there must be bound up with that belief the conviction that the universe is capable of securing such conservation, unless we are to accept a view, repudiated by Bosanquet,[2] that "religion is an arbitrary attitude of the finite mind resting on no reality beyond it," or "a practical attitude adopted towards the universe independently of any assignable state of facts or realities which can in reason sustain it."[3] The Christian faith in God could not maintain itself, *e.g.* if there were strong theoretic grounds for supposing that God is in the process of things other than as Controller, that He is being evolved, or that He is a God in difficulties owing to certain crass elements of existence. The power it trusts must be the power that holds the secret of the world's coherence. It is not concerned to deny contingency and risks. But, for it, the risks are most real and serious in the

[1] Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 206.
[2] *Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. 255.
[3] *Ibid.*

moral sphere. In other words, for the Christian religion the essential drama of the universe is ethical rather than cosmic. The danger is not that the structure of things may collapse, but that man may miss salvation. Yet it is equally necessary for Christian faith to conceive of this drama of the soul, or of the will, as taking place in an environment worthy of it. For it is not an incident appearing in some strange and inexplicable way within a mechanical system, and interfering, so to speak, with the smooth working of the machine. Rather, in religious experience, the universe announces its deepest meaning. Hence the need for Christian theology to declare that "God, whatever else He may be, must needs be the Absolute," while guarding itself in the language of Professor Galloway to the effect that "Absolute in the theistic acceptation of the word is definitely distinguished from the speculative Absolute, which is the sum of reality."[1] It is a demand in which the rational, emotional, and ethical elements are so closely woven together that it is only by an effort of abstraction that we can hold them apart. The dilemma presented to us that to claim Absolutism for God is to deny His personality, and on the other hand to assert His personality is to imply His finitude, is one that theology cannot accept. It cannot accept the view that God is an "appearance of reality," or envisage the universe as a dualism seen against a dark background of fate. For it is within the sphere of personality, of experience, that everything takes place that has for man any meaning. It is here he learns to speak of transcendence and immanence, of revelation, of an influence that may

[1] *Cf.* Watson, *The Philosophical Basis of Religion*, p. 113.

go forth to expend itself without exhaustion, of a subjection that may be the very flower of freedom. Christian theology feels compelled to say with Lotze that "true personality is with the infinite." Its doctrine of personality would not "divide up the universe into a number of self-enclosed individuals." It is in the region of personality that man's life touches the secret and is continuous with the inner meaning of the universe. "I reaffirm resolutely," says Varisco,[1] "the doctrine of values. . . . He who denies the value of the person, or does not recognise it as the principle and the fulcrum of every known value, does not know what he is saying. And the value of the whole as a whole stands or falls with the permanence of such a value."

"The Christian God," writes Professor Adams Brown, "is at once personal and absolute, and the history of Christian theology is in large part the history of the effort to unite these two aspects of the thought of God in a consistent conception." The difficulty of reaching this consistent conception has been referred to. It is held that, since personality is a finite form, to apply the thought of personality to the Absolute Subject is "tantamount to conceiving it as finite."[2] Mr Bradley, who is characterised by Höffding as "England's most renowned thinker of recent times," has made us familiar with the formidable character of this difficulty. Religion, according to Mr Bradley,[3] is attended by a "fundamental inconsistency." For it is "essentially practical," *i.e.* it is a relation between a "perfect real

[1] *Know Thyself*, p. 262, note.
[2] *Cf.* Omand, *The Foundations of Knowledge*, p. 440 ff.
[3] *Cf. Essays on Truth and Reality*, chap. xv.

will" and my will, yet it claims for the object of its worship "supreme power and goodness." The inconsistency lies in this, that the claim of religion cannot be harmonised with its essential nature. It is essentially a relation, and "the Absolute is related to nothing." The God of religion, then, must be "less" than the Absolute, and religion a relation maintained within the Absolute, not with the Absolute. We are thus faced by the dilemma that the moment religion attempts to worship the Absolute, the Absolute is by that very act "transformed," since worship implies a relation. Put otherwise, religion's dilemma is this, that while belonging to the world of relation, and therefore to the world of "appearance," it aspires to invest its object with reality. But to establish a relation with reality is to reduce reality, so to speak, to something less than real, since reality is out of all relation. A position like this enables one to understand Höffding's remark that "if Bradley must be classified, he must be called far more a Kantian than a Hegelian," notwithstanding that "he himself thinks he owes much to Hegel," and that "Hegel's acute dialectic impresses him strongly."

Bradley admits that this inconsistency that attends religion "seems irremovable, and at first sight may threaten us with ruin." One way of escape is to "reject the perfection of God," to cease from the claim that God is absolute, and to find in the practical relation of our will to a being who has only "limited knowledge and power," though "still sufficiently superior to ourselves to be worshipped," all the reality we need. On such a footing religion might persist, for it is no unworthy task for man to

help God in His efforts, even if there be no assurance that these will succeed. Yet the danger to religion from this attitude is admitted. It means that religion is "set on a lower level." For to assist an imperfect God is to be "face to face with a desperate task or a forlorn adventure." Yet, on the other hand, if religion asserts a perfect God, at once its fundamental inconsistency confronts it. But ought we to be intimidated by the charge of inconsistency? "Is ultimate theoretic consistency a thing that is attainable anywhere?" Bradley answers this question in the negative. Perfect consistency is found only in the Whole. The most we can say of the religious ideas in which we express our deepest needs is that they are true, though they do not possess ultimate truth. In this respect they are like the rest of our ideas. The test of truth in the religious sphere is purely pragmatic. On practical grounds the religious man is certain that his "will counts," and that "goodness must be master of the world." But if he would attempt to give theoretic expression to this practical faith he can only do so in ideas that are inconsistent and "in a word mythological." Mr Bradley illustrates his contention by reference to the question of "the personality of God." He assumes that "a personal God is not the ultimate truth about the universe," that in such ultimate truth something higher than personality must be included. If we think the matter out, the doctrine of such a God is not defensible at the bar of metaphysics. But, on the other hand, as we have seen, religion must think of God as in relation with man. It therefore "may" think of Him as a person—it is not admitted that it must so think—

for it is impossible to hold that there cannot be religion without a personal God. But more essential, insists Bradley, than to think of God as personal is it to think of His will as really present in mine. This is a thought indispensable to religion, and, strange as it may seem, the thought of personality is held to be subsidiary to this. Nevertheless, we have again the practical test. If the idea of personality is practically necessary in the highest religious experience, it is true. Theoretic considerations will not contradict the truth, though they may "supplement and correct" it. The conclusion to which Mr Bradley comes is thus stated: "If, in short, for religion you need a personal God, you must accept also a creed which is not consistent. And so far as you refuse the price, you pay in injury or ruin to religion."

The dilemma seems a serious one for theology. The doctrine of the personality of God cannot be defended theoretically; on the other hand, if it be abandoned, religion, which is essentially practical, is involved in injury or ruin. Now, if this meant only that what might be called the religious assurances of religion continually tend to outstrip the power of the intellect to formulate them, the dilemma would not be serious. "We need not hesitate to admit," writes Dr Denney,[1] "that when we speak of God the only terms we can use are symbolic or analogical." There is a wise and "justifiable" Agnosticism distinguished by a recent writer from "vulgar" or "common" Agnosticism which the theologian ought to be the first to acknowledge. It consists in the admission that "Reality

[1] *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 398.

must contain aspects that are not thought," while "giving no ground for doubting our conviction as to the place which intellect and truth hold in the Absolute." It casts no discredit on "our human estimate of the relative truth of different theories about the real, nor lends any support to the notion that knowledge is relative in the sense that there may conceivably be no correspondence between Reality and the scheme of human knowledge as a whole." The deeper emotional and æsthetic experiences are here on the same level as the religious. They find their own expression in music or poetry, in a form far removed from the dialectic of the metaphysician. But the dilemma, as Mr Bradley presents it to us, would seem to be more serious. For we would seem to be compelled by the presence of our religious needs to make statements that will not stand the searchlight of reason. Religion becomes, therefore, a sort of compromise with reality, a *modus vivendi* we cannot escape entering into, but which is bound to break down ; a treaty that cannot but be "denounced" the moment we give logic its way. For religion is communion with God. But with Reality, in Mr Bradley's sense of the word, there can be no communion, since communion is relation, and the Absolute is related to nothing. The only conclusion we seem to be able to draw from this is that from the religious point of view Mr Bradley's Absolute is quite negligible. Is it in any better case, one may ask, from the standpoint of reason ? Has this distinctionless, relationless Whole any significance for thought, any more than for emotion or faith ? "The Absolute is not personal, nor is it moral, nor is it beautiful or true."

We have here a "Reality" that continues in a state of impotence and negation until man's faith imparts to it some sort of significance, but at the cost of making it less than real. God is "less" than the Absolute. But here we would seem to be in the region of metaphor, and making use of quantitative and even spatial analogies. God is less than the Absolute in the sense in which the engine-driver is less than the locomotive. The driver certainly weighs less and occupies less space, but from the point of view of values, whether intellectual or ethical, no comparison is possible. Whatever may threaten the validity of the doctrine of the personality of God, in the sense in which Christian theology would present it, one feels that it cannot be this "Whole" of Mr Bradley's philosophy. For it seems to be "the gulf that washes down" not only the assurances of religion but the insight of the artist and the generalisations of the man of science, rather than "the happy isle" that may be regarded as the ideal towards which all human striving tends. "Is theoretical consistency a thing that is attainable anywhere?" asks Mr Bradley. But even if with "justifiable" Agnosticism we answer this question as he would have us answer it, in the negative, must we go on to say that such consistency is only attainable at the cost of everything that gives our life meaning and value? Some of Mr Bradley's critics see in his latest pronouncement on "God and the Absolute" a distinct modification of earlier views.[1] The greater significance attached to the "postulate of personality," to the religious needs of man, to the notion even of a "finite God," "who

[1] Schiller, *Mind*, N.S., No. 95, p. 365.

is now acknowledged not only to be thinkable but adorable and superior, in theoretic consistency, to the God of perfect religion," undoubtedly tend to remove the harshnesses of the earlier discussions. For whatever meaning and value is accorded to the world of appearance tends to bring down the Absolute from the region of the unknowable and to invest it with a less remote interest. There is something, then, in the criticism that it is a "very much modified Absolute" we get in the latest pronouncement, an Absolute that is no longer "a God-engulfing, soul-destroying monster that brooks no rival and no other." But the result is that "it is no longer possible to say what its functions are, either theoretically or practically."[1] Practically it is useless unless it be "transformed" or reduced by man's religious need into a finite God—a result which theology cannot accept. And on the theoretical side it seems now to be admitted that we may harbour scepticism regarding the Absolute without endangering any of the most serious interests of life. For while metaphysical speculation may yield to elect spirits a certain mystical satisfaction, born of contemplating the Whole, for others it may issue in "the denial of any known satisfactory doctrine and the despair of any further attainment." Mr Bradley's own confession is that he has escaped both Scepticism and Pessimism. Speculation has "inspired him with a higher and wider confidence and a better grounded sympathy with all that is best in life." Yet it must be recognised that, for many, scepticism and despair may be "the intelligent outcome of sincere metaphysical endeavour." Such

[1] Schiller, *Mind*, N.S., No. 95, p. 366.

scepticism, however, if one takes Mr Bradley rightly, need not destroy religion. It leaves us truths as "working ideas." Our incapacity to reach by way of speculation a conception of the Absolute need not debar us from our share in the deeper experiences and higher activities of life. It is this line of reflection that has prompted, perhaps not unnaturally, the remark that "the pragmatist strike against the Absolute must be solemnly called off," since "the Absolute has abdicated and resigned all its functions."

Theology, then, must agree that God is not the Absolute in Mr Bradley's sense of the term. But if it gives assent to the conclusion that the Absolute has "abdicated," must it admit that the vacant place is taken by a "finite God"? On the Christian level, religious experience means communion with a God who is Reason, Will, and Love. Is the reality of this communion secured only by admitting that this God is not the highest? May we not make use of the category of personality in our effort to determine the highest principle of the universe? The answer which idealistic philosophy of a certain type gives to this question is not encouraging. "A person must be finite," says Mr Bradley, "or must cease to be personal." And Mr Bosanquet has warned us against seeking in the "exclusive," the "impervious," the "repellent" self our principle of explanation, and against "exaggerating the claims of the negative and exclusive elements in the self." Christian theology would freely endorse this warning. There is a sense in which, as Mr Bosanquet says, the terms "persons," "personalities," and "self-consciousness" indicate "something bad." "At

his minimum" a person is "mere exclusiveness and antagonism"; "at his maximum he is one with the greatest and widest forms of life." Now, Christian theology would be very much in earnest in taking the person "at his maximum." But in doing so it is debarred from thinking of him as "one" with the greatest forms of life in any pantheistic sense. The central contention of a philosophy such as Mr Bosanquet presents to us in his Gifford Lectures, viz. that the self carries within itself a principle of transcendence, is one to which theology may give hearty assent. But unless the word transcendence is to be robbed of real meaning, the experience by which a self rises above itself and gains greater inclusiveness of content, must invest the fact of personality with added significance. As the present writer has written elsewhere:[1] "When Mr Bosanquet tells us that we must not acquiesce in inadequate conceptions of ourselves, that we must not take the individual at the minimum, and that 'the fuller self is the truer self,' there is ready response. Theology is as much concerned as Idealism to contest the claims of the 'exclusive self' or the 'repellent self-consciousness' to represent experience. And when it is argued that the self through union with others becomes 'more itself,' that in religious experience freedom and spontaneity reach a climax, because the self, ceasing to stand on its own rights, goes out of itself in a service that is perfect freedom, it would seem as if theology and Idealism might join hands in a sure alliance. It is all in the interests of theology to grant that the height of individuality is reached when the sense of

[1] *Constructive Review*, Sept. 1914.

identity with man, nature, and God is at its greatest, that the individual taken at his best is a very different being from the individual on the average level of his life, or that the formal separateness of individuals is of far less significance than their essential identity of content. With a sharp eye on the term 'identity,' and a due reminder that it is a term lacking significance apart from the fact of difference, theology might freely say that here we have described, though no doubt in language somewhat abstract, the Christian view of the self. Apart from life and service in the Kingdom of God there is no wealth of content for the individual. Indeed, it is only in the large life of the kingdom that individuality becomes ours. The least in the kingdom is greater than he who stands apart in never so splendid isolation. It is, however, when we come to consider the relation of the higher experiences to the absolute experience that difficulties emerge. Mr Bosanquet claims that considerations of the self such as we have just touched on give us a new lead in this important matter. But it may fairly be doubted if the lead is one that theology is warranted in following. For the position taken seems to be this, that the Absolute experience includes and absorbs the higher experiences, and that 'without reproducing them in their separate distinctness.' This is a hard saying for theology. If this is the mode of inclusion in the Absolute experience, the 'votaries of personality' may well acknowledge themselves to have been under a delusion. Mr Bosanquet himself admits the 'fundamental difficulty,' and feels that we may well doubt the possibility of conceiving how our experiences

can be 'fused,' 'absorbed,' or 'transcended' in a single experience. But he thinks that the difficulty can be removed in principle. Our less complete attitudes are transcended by our more complete. In an intense religious experience like Dante's, the various elements—ethical, æsthetic, and the rest—are fused. But it must be urged that Dante was never more completely himself than in that supreme moment.

"We are here at the crucial point of this philosophy, and the author is quite alive to the fact. He knows that he may be charged with 'volatilising' the individual into 'a logical progression of ideas.' He replies by warning us against 'logical pessimism,' *i.e.* against the mood in which we despair of the power of the One to include and transcend the Many. Well, a constructive theory cannot afford either to despair of logic or to despise it, and Mr Bosanquet's conception of logic is so delivered from barrenness and formalism that it may be a valuable apologetic aid. But may not theology be led to inquire, in its very anxiety to be loyal to this nobly conceived logic, if the relation of the various elements in an experience like Dante's really casts light on the relation of various centres of experience to an absolute experience? In Dante's experience we have the ethical, æsthetic, and theoretic elements all held in thrall, so to speak, by the dominant religious interest. But these various elements are aspects, or phases, or activities of a total experience or self we call Dante. His religion fused them and gave unity, compelling them to contribute to the one dominant interest. But no one of these aspects was in itself a centre of experience. Now, it seems

impossible to think of the relation of different centres of experience as we think of the relation of various aspects or activities of one experience. A self is never just an aspect of another self. In so far as it is so its value is diminished. The central, and it may be the inexplicable, fact of life is this, that in so far as one life influences, penetrates, and possesses another, that other is neither 'fused' nor 'absorbed,' but liberated and exhibited in its true selfhood. The difficulty appears again when Mr Bosanquet deals with Theism in his second course of lectures. There the position taken seems to be this, that the God of Theism is only an aspect of the Absolute, an appearance of a deeper reality of which the term 'personality' is an inadequate description. This position seems to be regarded as unassailable in view of the fact of immanence. Modern Theism lays stress on immanence. But, says Mr Bosanquet, in effect, if you make good the fact of immanence you destroy Theism. It seems to be regarded as inconceivable that a personality can be awarded the supreme place in the universe. Now, theology will not seek to deny that here it faces its supreme problem, and that the theoretic difficulties are tremendous. But, as regards immanence, it is entitled to urge something like the following. Our notion of immanence seems to be derived solely from what we know of personal influence. The artist is immanent in his work, the writer in his book, the master in his disciple. The word immanence would seem to have no other meaning for us than this, that a power we cannot think of otherwise than as personal reveals itself in creative activity. Idealism sometimes speaks as if

the idea of creation were totally inadequate to do justice to the relation between the One and the Many. But theology can find no other idea so satisfying. It is in creation that personality reveals its freedom. The expenditure of the artist is not his impoverishment, but the revelation of his wealth. If God creates the world, says Mr Bosanquet, it is not free. But must not theology reply that that is the very reason why it is free? It is free-born and enters into its heritage through submission to the divine will. If a man, it is said, is a channel of divine grace he is not free. But theology must take heart and reply that a man is free only as he is a channel of divine grace—though the word 'channel,' it must be granted, is not a happy choice. And theology is emboldened to make these affirmations because it cannot think of personality as a mere aspect of life, a highly curious and interesting phase of existence, but as central and of inexhaustible significance. It does not appear as if anything were gained by investing the term 'individuality' with a dignity denied to personality. The individual, grants Mr Bosanquet, must 'at least' be a person. Can we think of the individual as more without finding ourselves in a misty region, where even Mr Bosanquet's logic fails us as a guide because the very road has disappeared?"

In setting forth, then, the Christian doctrine of God, theology must be firm in maintaining that in the category of personality is to be sought our highest principle of interpretation. The theoretical difficulties are admittedly great. The universe as science discloses it to us, the fact of contingency, the problems of suffering and of moral evil lay a heavy

burden on him who would maintain that God is at once personal and absolute. But how does it stand with other interpretations? Can it be said that Naturalism offers an explanation of things that affords theoretical satisfaction, to say nothing of the violence done to our sense of ethical and emotional values? Or is the case any better with Monism, even of a spiritual type? When Mr M'Taggart,[1] *e.g.*, writes that "the Absolute though not personal is nevertheless spiritual," can we form any satisfying conception of an abstract impersonal spirit suffusing the universe and constituting, so to speak, an atmosphere in which personality appears and has its brief being? It is claimed for this impersonal spiritual Absolute that it is "in harmony with the most fundamental desires of our spirit." Mr M'Taggart contests the view, though with great sensitiveness to the difficulties involved, that the rejection of belief in a personal God must be depressing and even dangerous to the ethical and emotional interests. It does not follow that many who find belief in a personal God an inspiration to well-doing would do less well were that inspiration withdrawn. M'Taggart[2] finds no rest in the thought of a "finite God." Nor does he admit that the Absolute of philosophy, even if invested with personality, would satisfy the "ordinary religious emotions." For religion, save in the case of some mystical thinkers, seems to feel no need of conceiving of the relation of persons to God as that of parts to the whole, but rather as that of subjects to a king or of children to a father. That is, religion conceives of the relation of

[1] *Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 92.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

man to God ethically rather than ontologically. Which is the deeper and more determinative relation? Mr M'Taggart, if we understand him rightly, would say the ontological. But theology would insist on the ethical, holding that the term "spiritual" is meagre to emptiness apart from personality. If Hegel, as Mr M'Taggart holds, regarded spirit as personal, but did not regard the Absolute as personal but rather as a "spiritual unity," how are we to conceive of what occurs when persons come together in a community and create what is called a common spirit? Mr M'Taggart associates himself with Hegel in holding that the Absolute is a spiritual unity, a society of persons. But what do we mean by the spirit that animates a society? The loyalty of the individual to the state, or of a man to his college, is after all loyalty to what persons have thought and felt and achieved. If the spirit that distinguishes a college, *e.g.*, is that of single-minded devotion to learning, can we think of it apart from the labours of scholars and thinkers who have displayed and left an inspiring example to their disciples? It is by a process of abstraction, and, it may be added, perhaps through lack of imagination, that we depersonalise this spirit and come to speak of it in general terms. Mr M'Taggart, it is true, does not insist that this spiritual unity is higher than personal. He does not lay upon us the burden of trying to conceive how, when we pass beyond the region of the personal into that of the indeterminate, we are making progress. On the other hand, however, it must be noted that he does not regard the spiritual unity as on a lower level than the personal. "Neither of these ideals is higher

than the other. Each is indispensable to the other." The question indeed as to which is higher he holds to be unmeaning. It is like asking whether the state or the citizen is the higher. "A state cannot exist without citizens, nor a citizen without the state." But may it not be urged that the citizens constitute the state in a sense in which it can hardly be said that the state constitutes the citizens? The state may give citizen status to a man who lacks the citizen spirit, *i.e.* there may be something formal in the action of the state apart from the vivid personal realising of obligations. The state is fundamentally a personal creation. Great personalities make large contributions; every contribution, whether large or small, is personal. Its laws are ultimately the work of persons, its authority is symbolised in a person, and wielded by persons. The fact of personality seems to be basal, and the spiritual unity seems to derive whatever significance it possesses from that fact. By divesting the Absolute of personality, it cannot be said that the structure of things becomes more intelligible. Mr M'Taggart concedes that nothing is to be gained by applying the term "God" to this impersonal spiritual unity. "It will be best to express our result by saying that the Absolute is not God, and in consequence that there is no God." Such is the cheerless result to which we are led, even along a line of thought where the term "spiritual" is freely made use of.

Mr M'Taggart's interpretation of Hegel is, of course, not left uncontested by philosophers who belong to the "Right" wing of the Hegelian movement. The late Professor Edward Caird,[1] *e.g.*, while

[1] *Evolution of Religion*, vol. ii. p. 82.

sharing in some measure the deep-rooted idealistic distrust of the term "Person," as one calling up "misleading legal associations," and remarking that even a man may be regarded as "much more than a person," nevertheless recognised that, whatever objections may be urged against the term, the question it raises as to the nature of God cannot be avoided. The question is, "Whether God, the ultimate principle of unity in the world, is to be regarded as an intelligent self-conscious being?"[1] Caird found in his concept of evolution, or, as we may put it, of progressive revelation, a ground for answering this question in the affirmative and so escaping the necessity of "dissolving the individuality of God . . . in a universal impersonal Thought which is attached to no thinker." The infinite is a self-determining principle of which we have self-revelations in nature and man, and therefore may be thought of as "the principle of unity in all things and yet as a living God in whose image man is made." Such a view, it is held, though attended by "many difficulties," affords escape from an "individualism which dissolves the unity of the world into atoms and an abstract Monism which leaves no room for any real individuality either in God or in man." Affinities with this position may be found in the treatment of the subject by Mr A. E. Taylor. Mr Taylor[2] makes no divorce between God and the Absolute. The Absolute is the only adequate object of religious devotion, and possesses "the structure which such an object requires." When we inquire as to the nature of this structure we get the following description:

[1] *Evolution of Religion*, vol. ii. p. 84.
[2] *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 399.

"Reality forms a single infinite individual system, of which the material is psychical matter of fact, and the individuality of the system lies ultimately in a teleological unity of subjective interest."[1] It is stated further that "apart from the appearances there is no reality at all," and that the aspirations of finite individuals must be satisfied and fulfilled in the supreme reality, "though not necessarily in the form in which they are consciously entertained by the finite aspirant."[2] At an earlier stage of the discussion the Absolute is declared to be "a conscious life which embraces the totality of existence." Here are pronouncements of philosophy that theology cannot but regard with friendly interest. The Absolute is no longer conceived of as out of all relations or as an impersonal spiritual principle. Self-determination and purposiveness are ascribed to the Real, and the statement that "apart from its appearances there is no reality at all" may be justly interpreted by theology as meaning that the concept of revelation is inseparable from that of God. Perhaps theology ought to sympathise more than it has been inclined to do with the reluctance of the philosophers to ascribe personality to the Absolute. For the difficulty, which is largely theoretical, is not felt so acutely in that region where theology gets its material—the region of religious experience. It is well known also how the fear of anthropomorphism haunts many philosophers. But, however objectionable may be the crude expressions found on lower levels of religious experience, theology must cling to what may be called the higher anthropomorphism in its

[1] *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 408.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 384.

loyalty to personality as a category of interpretation of the Real. It cannot but hold that failure in this loyalty issues in a view of the universe that presents the most serious theoretical difficulties, and is incompatible with the maintenance of a living and progressive religion.

The conclusion we reach, then, is that theology cannot accept the doctrine of a finite God. It cannot secure the reality or *quasi*-reality of God at the expense of His Absoluteness. In religious communion the divine is not reduced from the level of absoluteness to that of appearance; it rather emerges from the region of the abstract into that of concrete relations. It must be affirmed that personality is something more than a value; it is an element in the structure, since goodness, truth, and beauty are values for personality. Even the logic that finds itself in such difficulties with the concept of personality is itself impossible apart from personality. Thus theology would come alongside of an idealism of the more constructive type and acknowledge its help in seeking to answer the question which Mr A. E. Taylor has called "the real question," *i.e.* "whether the Absolute can be made an object of religious worship . . . without a breach of logic." It remains, of course, to be said that even the affirmation of the absoluteness and personality needs to be supplemented in order to complete the Christian statement. The further affirmation that God is goodness or love—which may be defined as goodness raised to the highest power—is necessary. It is true that the explanation of pessimism is to be sought chiefly in the fact that in pessimistic systems a dark impersonal fate is sub-

stituted for God. Still, the thought of an absolute personality whose attitude to his world was one of antagonism is not excluded. Hence the need for a line of reflexion, such as Lotze[1] followed, that the divine must be thought of not only as supremely knowledge and power, but as love. "We must consult the needs and claims of the affections and the heart. And these may be summed up by saying that the highest principle cannot be otherwise designated than as that which has absolute value and worth." Thus the idea of the divine love completes the threefold cord, enabling us to bind the thought of absoluteness and personality together. For love is the highest enrichment and expression of personality, and the thought of love as regnant in the control of the universe gives rational support to the aspirations with which we confront reality. Moreover, it is in the deep emotional experiences of religion that we have that expansion of the self which leads us to seek with confidence our highest principle of interpretation in personality. Dr Inge[2] has criticised Professor Pringle-Pattison for the assertion of the "imperviousness" of the self, and contrasted it with "the absolutely fluid conception of personality which we find in the New Testament." But the self is never more "impervious" than when most expansive. A man is never so truly himself as when at the height of his sympathy. That is the characteristic of personality to which justice is not always done. And it is here that the idea of love is so illuminating and decisive. It is our one means of understanding,

[1] *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 122.
[2] *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, p. 75.

however dimly and imperfectly, how the limitations of finite personality may be transcended in an absolute experience which, though we can never compass it by our thought, or appraise it adequately by our moral estimate, or fathom its depths even with the plummet of emotion, must realise in ineffable measure everything that gives meaning to our life.

CHAPTER III

THE LEGACY OF ISRAEL

Our object here is to present a brief estimate of the indebtedness of theology to the Old Testament in its task of constructing a Christian doctrine of God. "The preaching of Jesus," says Troeltsch,[1] "presupposes the peculiarly complicated religious history of later Judaism." And later Judaism is to be understood in the light of earlier developments, "the development of Jahveh religion into prophetism, into legalism and priestly religion, into messianism and into apocalypticism." The legacy of Israel is therefore one of almost bewildering wealth, as an examination of the elaborate Old Testament theologies of, *e.g.*, Dillmann, Schultz, and Davidson will show. Under such headings as "The Spiritual Personal God of Israel," "Revelation and Names of God," "The Being and Attributes of God," "Creation and Providence" (Schultz); or, following Davidson, "The Knowledge of God," "Essence and Attributes of God," "The Unity of God," "The Doctrine of the Sole Godhead of Jehovah in later Prophecy," "The Personality and Spirituality of God," "The Spirit of God," "The Divine Attributes," the abundant material is displayed and expounded from every point of view.

[1] *Amer. Journ. of Theology*, Jan. 1913.

The Christian Idea of God

The Christian doctrine of God has been defined as a "Theism enriched by what was given historically in and through Jesus Christ."[1] The legacy of Israel is the record of the experience capable of such enrichment. From the present point of view the significance of the Old Testament lies in this, that its central affirmation is that of a Divine Personality to whom there comes to be ascribed absolute sovereignty over the world. "Unquestionably," writes Davidson,[2] "the most distinct and strongly marked conception in regard to God in the Old Testament is that of His personality. This appears on every page." And Schultz says: "In the Old Testament conception of God nothing stood out from the first so strongly and unmistakably as the personality of the God of Israel." The idea of personality may be reduced at earlier stages by anthropomorphic views of God, or dimmed at later stages by the tendency to emphasise in an abstract way the divine transcendence, but it is ever the ruling idea. The God of the Old Testament is the living God. And it is significant that when the ethical and religious relation to God is most deeply realised, faith is bold to assert His absoluteness. It is the God who is preeminently the Saviour of whom it is said that His glory will He not give to another; it is in connection with the great challenge, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," that we have the great declaration, "For I am God and there is none else." It is along the way of righteousness and redemption that Jahveh passes from the throne of Israel to that of the world. The covenant God of

[1] Paterson, *Rule of Faith*, p. 205.
[2] Davidson, *Theology of O.T.*, p. 100.

Israel may still be regarded as existing alongside of other gods, but the God who writes His new covenant on the heart of the individual has no rival. Thus the extension of Jahveh's rule is really the deepening of the relation between Him and men. Still, though it was not by way of speculation that the prophets reached the conviction that God is sole God of heaven and earth, the conclusion was not lacking in intellectual strength and clearness. "From Jeremiah downwards the prophets gave undoubted and clear expression to a theoretical monotheism" (Davidson). The spectacle of world-empires menacing Israel could not but challenge thought. And in the conclusion that the world-powers were instruments in the hand of Jahveh to fulfil His purpose, even through the punishment of His own people, we see at work the need for some principle of explanation. The famous passage on idolatry in the later portion of Isaiah expresses a judgment at once theoretical and practical. The intellectual scorn of the passage is no less marked than its moral fervour.

"The history of Israel," says Davidson, "is the history of prophecy." In seeking to learn what Israel has contributed to the knowledge of God and His ways we turn to the prophets of the Old Testament. There we have religious experience at its finest and highest. In these inspired men the thought of God disengages itself from everything that is unworthy, acquires rich content, and reveals amazing resources of strength and tenderness. But the very splendour of the prophetic witness to God prompts questions as to the earlier religious experience of Israel. "Without Moses," says Cornill,[1]

[1] *Prophets of Israel*, p. 36.

"the prophets would never have existed. . . . As faithful and just stewards they have put to interest the pound they inherited from Moses." For manifold reasons critical questions cannot be dealt with here. But it is of interest to note that the present tendency is to assign a greater significance to the traditional view of the history of Israel than literary criticism of a past generation was ready to accord. This does not mean that the traditional view of the Old Testament has been rehabilitated, but rather that, on the question as to the relation of the prophetic to the pre-prophetic period, the work that seemed to reach finality with writers like Kuenen and Wellhausen is being revised. There are fresh explorations in what may be called the hinterland of prophecy, and the view that any Old Testament writing that expresses the higher ideals of monotheistic religion can have no relation to the dim region of Animism, Totemism, and other forms of primitive religion is no longer regarded as tenable. This is held without seeking to deny for a moment that the work of the Wellhausen school was a triumph of historical investigation, and certainly without underestimating the service rendered by the school in arousing, not only in theologians but in educated men everywhere, a sense of the value of the prophets. It is increasingly felt that the assumption of literary criticism, that the expression of an idea in literature must be coincident with its influence upon life, is one we are not entitled to make. Ideas may energise and be fruitful long before they receive the classic expression that makes them the permanent possession of mankind. The failure to recognise this makes it difficult to account for the prophetic movement. If

the prophets received no talent to trade with, but presented themselves suddenly in their extraordinary spiritual wealth, what becomes of the evolutionary view of religion on which the critical school laid such stress? It has to be recognised, then, that the pre-prophetic period was richer in the elements and possibilities of culture than is often supposed. The patriarchal period coincided with advanced civilisations, and we cannot think of Israel as without any share in these. Winckler's efforts to interpret the Old Testament in the light of Babylonian ideas is a matter for experts. But these efforts would seem to be guided by a right instinct in seeking for a higher development of ideas in the primitive period of Israel's history than certain critics would allow.

The question is of interest here in relation to the J E stories in Genesis, in their two main groups—the stories about the beginnings of things in the first eleven chapters, and the patriarchal narratives which occupy the rest of the book. Criticism brings these documents into touch with the prophetic movement by assigning them to the eighth and ninth centuries B.C. Are they wholly the product of that movement, or do they witness to valuable religious elements of an earlier age, in the light of which we are helped to understand prophecy? The view that they are in vital respects pre-prophetic is supported now by well-known authorities. It is Gunkel's opinion, *e.g.*, that we are not sufficiently acquainted with the history of the religion of Israel to assert that ideas first expressed by Amos and his successors did not exist before these prophets. And Skinner[1] would take us beyond even the prophetic

[1] *Genesis*, p. li.

movement of the ninth century in quest of the impulse that reveals itself in the Genesis narratives. Forces "inherent in the religion from the time of Moses" were adequate to produce them. This is a view that acquires force from a further contention of more recent criticism that it is not obligatory to regard J and E as the work respectively of a single mind, but allowable to see in their present form the outcome of a long oral tradition. It is on the nature and content of that tradition that we find attention fastened. Thus it would seem that in examining the Genesis stories we are not dealing with ideas that sprang up in the eighth century, but which are witnesses to the religion of an earlier time. It is evident that to determine the nature and relation of these ideas must be one of the most delicate tasks of criticism. It may be that the earlier group, in contrast with the later, shows signs of Babylonian influence. In any case, the contrast has to be noted. "It is remarkable," says Professor Welch,[1] "how in these stories there is a different spirit from that which characterises J's other stories. The conception of God is anthropomorphic to a degree which is remarkable in any circumstances, but which is peculiarly remarkable when contrasted with the conception which pervades the series of stories combined in the Joseph cycle." Gunkel's view that the nomadic conditions revealed in the patriarchal narratives indicate a date as early as 1200 B.C. as marking the close of their formative period, and that the following three centuries were those of modification, is interesting if highly conjectural. Of great interest would be the question

[1] *Religion of Israel*, p. 244.

as to the precise nature of that modification, and the suggestion that written documents lie behind J and E is significant as showing the extent of the reaction of more recent criticism.

The tendency, then, is to estimate more highly the value of the patriarchal narratives as witnesses to an age earlier than the prophetic. The historical worth of the stories is not lessened but increased by the view that they are legends rather than myths, for the legend has a connection, however difficult to trace, with actual happenings. Here again we have a modification in more recent work of earlier critical views. The suggestion that the patriarchal relations and antagonisms recorded in the Genesis stories reflect political antagonisms of the age of the monarchy has been sharply criticised and set aside by many. Nor has the view that the patriarchs are "eponymous" heroes passed without stricture, though the coincidence of personal and tribal names gives colour to the view, and the contention that the narratives give us the history of tribes rather than of individuals is not unreasonable. Yet, as Skinner insists, the "wealth of detail" in the stories, what we may call their psychology, and the abundance of human interest tell against such an estimate. Moreover, the patriarchs move in a scene which we feel to be not wholly the creation of art, masterful as is the art that depicts it. And this may be urged while admitting that the essentially ideal character of the narratives must be recognised. "It must be emphasised," says Welch,[1] "that what concerns us is not the originals from which the accounts have been derived. . . . What does con-

[1] *Religion of Israel*, pp. 5 and 6.

cern us is the form into which they were cast and the spirit which guided those who recast them. . . . To recognise that the stories have come from many sources is to recognise also the power of the men who gave them their present form." If the Abraham of Genesis is the creation of faith, the question becomes of immense interest. When did faith adequate to such a high task become a factor in the life of Israel? For "what gives J E the influence it possessed and still possesses is not that which it had in common with other faiths" (Welch). This is not out of harmony with Gunkel's view that even at an early period the religion of Israel had a character and quality that differentiated it from a mere nomadic religion. The bearing of this on the evolutionary view, as frequently stated, is significant. It is less easy than ever, in view of recent research, to arrange the various stages of religious progression. Higher and lower types of religion are found together; the power of the latter certainly does not mean the absence of the former, and it is an open question at what pre-prophetic period the higher monotheistic impulse was at work.

When we turn to inquire as to the convictions regarding God and His relations to the world and to men that find expression in the Genesis narratives, the answer is of profound interest. "The document," says Welch,[1] "is unhesitatingly monotheistic, in the sense that to its authors there is only one God whose will is of any significance or whose favour need be sought." Indeed, so deep-seated and pervading is the sense of the divine unity that there are lacking the warnings against idolatry that

[1] *Religion of Israel*, p. 8.

are so marked a feature of later writings. "Loyalty (to Jahveh) is taken for granted as though nothing else were possible." Bound up with this conviction of the divine unity is that of the personality and spiritual nature of God. "Jahveh is a free personality who is bound to no place, but is able to reveal Himself where He will, and who is only determined by His own will when He thus reveals Himself."[1] This self-determining character of Jahveh is seen in the view of his relation to nature and to the sanctuaries of his worship. Nature is the instrument of his will; the sanctuaries the places chosen by him for his self-revelation. Nothing is more remarkable in the narratives than the mastery which this exalted conception of God exerts over the deposit of primitive, or, at any rate, cruder ideas. Symbols of these ideas, of course, are not absent. "One hears of the mazzeba erected beside the altar. . . . One catches a glimpse of the sacred well and the holy tree." But faith is not embarrassed by these emblems. Rather we see it as the quality of soul that sends Abraham forth on his great quest, in response to the word of Jahveh. How fittingly one may apply to Abraham the words of a modern: "He had drunk the questioning cup, that which denieth peace, and which projects us on the missionary search for the How, the Wherefore, and the Why ever afterwards. He said, 'by and by, to pleasure, battle to-day'" (Meredith). When Abraham builds an altar he calls on the name of Jahveh. There is something more than the rite; there is the recognition of, the craving for, communion with a God whose most fitting worship is,

[1] *Religion of Israel*, p. 9; *cf.* pp. 10, 16.

after all, the response of man's spirit and the obedience of his will. Sacrifice, as Welch has insisted, is not conceived as a propitiation but as a gift. It is an expression of the gratitude and sense of dependence that are elements in faith, an "acknowledgment on the part of the worshipper of the grace God has bestowed on him." The attitude to sacrifice in J E means that we are on a level of religious experience where ideas connected with magic have ceased to have any relevance. The conviction that Jahveh is a "free personality" is incompatible with any thought of controlling the divine in man's interest. Just as faith in Jahveh rose above the idea of propitiation, and became a response to the divine grace, so it rose above magic, and became the loyal acceptance of the divine will. The belief that man can determine God yielded to faith in the divine determinism, in the recognition of which, however, man's freedom is secured. This faith enables us also to see how the predictive element in prophecy may belong to the higher level of religious experience. This element is sometimes spoken of as less worthy, and the distinction is drawn between "insight" and "foresight." But the prophetic foresight is really insight into the methods by which the will of Jahveh achieves its purposes. It is the discernment of the moral order.

In prophecy, then, with its rich, significant background is to be sought the material of Israel's legacy. And in its first work, in exploring and interpreting the background, we have already set before us convictions that are decisive for all the later development. As regards these convictions there is only one term that presents itself as appropriate and adequate—the

term revelation. The time is past for speaking of revelation as the communication of doctrines, and past also, it may be said, for considering the question of a special original revelation. But it is not past surely for emphasising the objective reference of this religious experience. If this religion is not to be regarded as a witness to revelation there is no further task for theology. Hence the idea of revelation is fundamental in the Old Testament. "The idea of man," says Davidson,[1] "reaching to a knowledge or fellowship of God through his own efforts is wholly foreign to the Old Testament. . . . Moses and the prophets are nowhere represented as thoughtful minds reflecting on the Unseen, and forming conclusions about it, or ascending to elevated conceptions of the Godhead. The Unseen manifests itself before them, and they know it." Perhaps the distinction here, between a "thoughtful mind reflecting on the Unseen" and the "Unseen manifesting itself" to such a mind, would be hard to maintain. Reflection on the Unseen involves the manifestation of the Unseen, and the idea of revelation is bound up with all experience. When Davidson speaks, further, of the revelation to the prophet as just "the truth breaking upon his mind"; and, again, of the prophetic experience as "an ethical intercourse of the mind with God"—adding, "a thing almost normal"; and, yet again, as an explanation of the progressiveness of revelation, of the impossibility of "an exhaustive communication of God . . . because the creature cannot take it in," he shows how prophetic experience may be interpreted simply without diminishing its significance. All experience

[1] *Theology of O.T.*, p. 34.

may be regarded as revelation, and it is the content of the experience that counts. "There is nothing in sensation which physical science cannot exhaust except the experience of having sensations; in the same way there is nothing in the mystic experience not expressible in idea except the experiencing itself."[1] In religious experience, such as we have in the Old Testament, we are face to face with that which defies analysis. The prophetic consciousness holds its own secret. Hence, in the Old Testament, as is frequently noted, we have an absence of "proofs" for the existence of God. The fact of God is not only accepted, it is lived and acted upon. The religion of the Old Testament is, if we may so put it, too religious to speculate on its own origin. There is indeed, as Davidson has pointed out, in certain places "an approximation to the arguments of Natural Theology," as, *e.g.*, when Second Isaiah anticipates Kant by inviting men to lift up their eyes to the starry heavens, and also in some of the later psalms. In such passages we may detect the first sign of new influences operating in the Old Testament mind. Skinner[2] notes that "the word 'create' occurs fifteen times in (Isaiah) chapters xl–lv, and five times in the chapters that follow; perhaps not more than nine times in the whole of the earlier literature." And he adds: "Its frequent use in these chapters is significant not only of the writer's theology but of the great movement of religious thought in Israel about the time of the Captivity." A psalm like the 139th may be said to contain Natural Theology; but the vision of the poet is

[1] Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 451.
[2] *Isaiah*, p. 12.

much more impressive than the deductions of the philosopher. Neither, then, in regard to the existence of God nor the knowableness of God do we have sustained reflexion in the Old Testament. That God is, and that He may be known, are fundamental conditions of the religion. The thought of transcendence is not absent. But its presence never embarrasses the conviction that what may be known of God is real knowledge. It is only later that the divine transcendence is so conceived as to involve some obstacle even in the way of the divine activity manifesting itself. But in the great days of the religion the knowledge of God is real knowledge. We are never in the region of the negatives, or where predication is shunned as a sort of impiety. Yet, along with the free and joyous expression of the divine attributes there goes the profound reverence that affirms that God cannot be comprehended by human faculty. The prophet sees God in a vision that is the mainspring of all his activity and the secret of all his hope. Yet deep in his heart is the consciousness that no man can see God and live, that man cannot by searching find out God. Religious experience holds the *rationale* of the paradox. It is the Old Testament assertion of that "justifiable Agnosticism" that must accompany and chasten all our thinking.

It is impossible, of course, to deal here in detail with the material presented by writers on Old Testament theology. When we emphasise the unity, personality, and spiritual character of God as elements pertaining to His "essence," and righteousness and grace as attributes or qualities revealed through the divine activity, a fair summary

is presented of the Old Testament contribution. From the theoretical point of view it is, therefore, a Theism that is disclosed as distinct from both Deism and Pantheism. The whole history is a witness to the fact of immanence. The word or spirit of God penetrates or mingles with the life of the prophet. "God is the absolute personality over against finite personalities, not absorbing personalities in Himself, nor by His personality excluding personalities beside Himself."[1] The strong insistence on the ethical character of God is the safeguard against both Deism and Pantheism; for, on the one hand, an ethical character can be known only through communion, and, on the other hand, it possesses a personal stamp and outline that Pantheism tends to blur. Thus Theism maintains the mean between an excess of feeling that leads to Pantheism and an over-emphasis of the theoretical element that leads to Deism. In Theism we have justice done to the threefold demand of life—the theoretical, emotional, and practical. The Theism of the Old Testament may be illustrated by a reference to the three attributes—holiness, righteousness, and the "redemptive" attribute, the love or grace of God. The term "holiness" may be said to express the more formal, abstract quality that denotes theory rather than practice or feeling. Davidson[2] notes that in its original sense, whether applied to God or man, it does not express a moral quality. It suggests rather a relation or status. Hence, when applied to God it represents His "transcendental attribute or that which we call Godhead." It is no doubt true

[1] Davidson, *Theology of O.T.*, p. 83.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

that "holy" did not express the idea of the Godhead "altogether abstractly"—the Hebrew mind did not move in the region of the abstract—and also true that some kind of moral content was given to the idea. Nevertheless, it was one that tended to become formal and ceremonial, to express a certain correctness of thought and action in regard to God rather than any deep sense of the divine. "Be ye holy, for I am holy" is not one of the great moving, challenging calls of the Old Testament such as we have in Amos or Hosea. Davidson calls attention to the interesting fact that in Ezekiel—and the same may be said of the Levitical law—the term "righteous" is never applied to God. "Men are righteous, but Jehovah is Kadosh."[1] On the other hand, Jeremiah does not use the term "holy" in regard to God, save once with reference to the words of God. The explanation of this contrast is, no doubt, to be sought largely in the fact that Jeremiah and Ezekiel were men of different training and temperament. Both were individualists and witnessed to a striking change that was taking place in the religion. But in each case the individualism had a character of its own. Jeremiah may be said to have emphasised the communion of the individual soul with God; what impressed Ezekiel was its lonely responsibility. Hence in Ezekiel we have the thought of the Divine transcendence beginning to find expression more or less abstract. The God of Puritanism is ever on the way to become the God of Deism. Hence, too, the importance attached to ritual, which is associated rather with formal correctness in worship than with strenuous moral activity

[1] Davidson, *Theology of O.T.*, p. 170.

or inwardness and depth of feeling. It may be said, then, that in the idea of holiness we have an effort to satisfy the theoretical interest, and that here we find a partial explanation at least of the tendency to conceive of the transcendence of God in an abstract way.

On the other hand, the ethical interest seeks satisfaction in the idea of righteousness. Here we have the ethical protest against abstract transcendence. "Righteousness is one, whether in God or man." It is not, like holiness, a separative quality of the divine character, that which withdraws God from man. It means rather that God is supreme in that region where man passes moral judgments and acknowledges the right which is the condition of his well-being. There is nothing less abstract than righteousness. "Morality," said Green, "lies in particulars." And righteousness embodies itself in conduct. God's righteousness is revealed both in judgment and mercy, in punishment and forgiveness, *i.e.* in dealings that are among the most concrete revelations of character. Even punishment implies a moral relation. The non-abstract character of righteousness is witnessed to even by the earlier belief that righteousness carried with it prosperity. Circumstances compelled the abandonment of that belief and a fresh reading of life. Yet, if prosperity came to be conceived more inwardly, and as less dependent on material things, it was none the less a real possession. The absence of outward things did not impair the stable relation of the soul to God. Indeed it was through suffering that the right relation to God was most deeply realised. The salvation that the suffering made the urgent need

of life could be spoken of as righteousness. "I bring near my righteousness, and my salvation shall not tarry." From this point of view Davidson can say with truth that righteousness is "not a divine attribute" but "a divine effect . . . a condition of the world produced by God." This is the crowning proof of its concrete character. It is that kingdom of God in which the right relation to God carries with it all other blessings. The righteousness of God in the Pauline sense of the phrase is in harmony with this. It is a right relation to God. The relation suggested by the term "holy" may be thought of as the relation of a courtier to his royal master, an important element of which is that the courtier knows how "to keep his distance." But the relation suggested by righteousness is really that of communion and ethical co-operation. Thus, for Paul, the righteousness of God is revealed in Christ, for in Christ we see life in its true relation to God. It is also the righteousness that is by faith. Always, the concept of righteousness lifts us above the level of law and ritual to that of communion.

The idea of righteousness is so rich in ethical content that it may be as truly called a religious as an ethical idea. "There is no antithesis," says Davidson, "between righteousness and grace. The exercise of grace, goodness, forgiveness may be called righteousness in God." The attributes designated "redemptive" express the emotional content of righteousness. The right relation to God implies an experience of His love and loving-kindness, His mercy, grace and compassion. The passages where these redemptive aspects of the divine activity are dwelt upon, as in Hosea and Deutero-Isaiah, are

aglow with the finest religious emotion. Nor does it detract from their value to recognise that prophecy "spoke of Jehovah as Redeemer mainly in relation to Israel." It is of the essence of love to be intense and concentrated. It reveals its universal character best by the passion with which it centres on this or that object. Love in general, as a diffused emotion or sentiment of benevolence, arouses no enthusiasm. Indeed it is only when the divine love is thought of as narrowing its field of action and concentrating on the individual rather than on the nation that its universal character is recognised. Jeremiah "founds his new society on what is universal, the circumcised heart."[1] In the Deutero-Isaianic conception of Israel as the servant of the Lord, who by righteousness and love wins the world to God, and the secret of whose triumph lies in this, that his soul is made an offering for sin; in the patience that breaks not the bruised reed, and in the will that shall not fail nor be discouraged till righteousness be set in the earth, the last vestige of Particularism disappears. The choice of the Servant is God's election of the world. The Servant is a great figure whose appeal to the conscience is through the emotions. His final word is really spoken from a Cross. And that word, because it is a word of passion, and pain, and love, is a universal word, for it is the appeal to the heart. In the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah the imperial note is struck, "He shall divide the spoil with the strong."

It was not to be expected that the post-exilic community could maintain itself on this high level. Only elect souls could realise the splendour of that message. Human nature is more at home on the

[1] A. C. Welch, *Religion of Israel*, p. 241.

lower levels of law and ritual than on the heights of sacrifice. The natural man prefers theology to religion, and burnt-offerings to the knowledge of God. It is hard to maintain the faith of an Amos in the direct intervention of an omnipotent and righteous Will, or to believe with Deutero-Isaiah that the pleasure of the Lord can prosper in the hand of pain. Hence, in the post-exilic community we have law and ritual, and reflections of Koheleth and the wisdom of the Book of Proverbs. The product is not to be despised, though it suffers by contrast. That the living piety of a Jeremiah endured is witnessed to by some of the psalms, though in some cases the piety is of the harassed and polemic order that attests the outward and inward pressure of the time. It would be unjust to deny inwardness to the religion of the post-exilic community, and protests of Jewish writers against the depreciation of the period are not unjustified. "That a religion that produced the psalter—and not only produced it, but used it with never a break—should be a religion with intensely spiritual possibilities, and its adherents capable of a vivid sense of the nearness of God, with an ever-felt and never-satisfied longing for communion with Him, is what we should fully expect."[1] There are psalms — in Montefiore's phrase—"of happy communion with God," psalms of praise and thanksgiving, and the 119th Psalm is a tribute to the idealising affection with which the law may be regarded, and to the fact that in Judaism the commandments were not always grievous. Nevertheless, it can hardly be doubted that as the community fell back on itself, and emphasised its

[1] Abrahams, *Judaism*, p. 68.

separation and even isolation from the rest of the world, as it shrank from and declined the way of the cross that Deutero-Isaiah had presented as the way to influence and victory, its sense of God, and of God's living relation to men, underwent a process of attrition. The phenomenon was not new in the history of religion. The men who refused to accept the message of the pre-exilic prophets and who clung to the belief that all was well, paid the price in a diminished conception of God. Neither a man nor a community can fall back on a lower idea, after a higher has been disclosed, without losing much of the significance that even the lower possessed. An exclusive community means a diminished God. And as the figure of the Servant fell into the background, to remain there until He who came not to be ministered unto but to minister recalled him from obscurity and neglect and disclosed his significance, the scribe, the wise man, and the priest grew in importance. Finally, apocalyptic, that strange successor of prophecy, arose to embody many of the deepest thoughts and highest hopes of the community.

Jewish apocalyptic cannot be placed on the intellectual and spiritual level of prophecy, though its object was similar to that of prophecy. It was an attempt to interpret God's purpose in regard to Israel and the world. The view that it was a religious reaction against the dominant Legalism of the age has been questioned, and with justice. It was rather an effort to interpret life and history on the basis of Legalism. Apocalyptic is a footnote to prophecy, added by a lesser hand.[1] It gives

[1] *Cf.* E. F. Scott, *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, chap. i.

the impression at times of the work of men made desperate by calamity. They seek escape and relief in a world that has for us to-day many fantastic features, for their pessimism, their loss of faith in the present order, reacts on their conception of God and of the divine method of saving the world. Yet at the heart of apocalyptic lay a "poignant hope" in God, and a belief that the good, however narrowly the good might be conceived of, would triumph. In apocalyptic the kingdom of heaven suffered violence. It had injustice done it by hard-driven hysterical men. Professor Murray has spoken of an age of Greek life and thought characterised by "a failure of nerve." Apocalyptic was a symptom of the same malady. Yet heroism and hope lit up the gloom. "Apocalyptic always spread its gorgeous pinions in the dusk of the national fortunes, but it strained to the near dawn of relief."[1]

It is usual to say that in the literature of Judaism —the apocryphal and apocalyptic literature—we find a growing emphasis on the transcendence of God. And this, on the whole, is the case. Yet weight must be given to the contention of Jewish writers, that while the divine transcendence is emphasised, God's relation to life is not denied. It is pointed out that we must distinguish between a false and true transcendence, and recognise that there is a doctrine of the divine transcendence which does not conflict with the thought of immanence, which does not involve Deism, and which, indeed, is a necessary element in any satisfying thought of God. A God whose elevation is so conceived that He cannot come into relation with life, and whose glory is safe-

[1] Moffatt, *Expositor's Greek Testament*, vol. v. p. 295.

guarded by dwelling on His remoteness, must soon lose value for the religious life. Jewish theologians deny that the false transcendence is the Jewish view. It must be granted that there is much in the literature that supports the denial. Greek influence had not asserted itself strongly enough to set the Jewish mind on that way of speculation which issues in the thought of a God raised above all relations. In Ben Sira, *e.g.*, as with earlier writers, the fear of the Lord is the beginning and sum of wisdom. God is not thought of as withdrawn behind a hierarchy of angels who rule the world as His ambassadors. There is still the thought of personal contact and control. "God will listen to the prayers of him that is wronged." Ben Sira speaks sometimes as a sage rather than a scribe, and reveals the influence of the Greek spirit. An instance of this is found in his exaltation of the meditative life, in his acknowledgment that God cannot be adequately spoken of, in a certain pantheistic strain in his thinking expressed in words like these, "The sum of our words is, He is All." But, on the other hand, as the scribe he identifies wisdom objectively with the law, and subjectively with trust in God and obedience to God's commands. Wisdom is no longer the great principle so magnificently portrayed in the Book of Proverbs, it is embodied in a book. In Ben Sira, and other writers of the second century B.C., the strong ethical interest balances the speculative. The title most frequently used in speaking of God, "the Most High," and the efforts to set forth the divine attributes, omniscience, omnipotence, and everlastingness, are found along with expressions of a very real sense of God, a God who hears prayer

and gives man guidance in life. As regards the literature of the first century A.D., Wicks,[1] after careful scrutiny, brings out this result, that if we except a passage in the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, where God is spoken of as remote even from Israel, the doctrine of the distant, transcendent God, in the false sense of the latter term, does not appear ; and further, that while eight writers speak of the angels as the ambassadors of God, in only one case is there lack of reference to the direct communication of God with man. The acceptance of Wicks' conclusion would tend to modify statements that have been made regarding the abstract nature of the Jewish doctrine.

But it was in the region of practice rather than of theory that the growing meagreness of the view of God made itself apparent. When God came to be regarded as only the God of Israel, with no purpose towards the nations but that of punishment, there could not but result an impoverishment of the whole religious view. While a writer like Ben Sira could express large-minded and tolerant views regarding the Gentiles, that view which, as Charles[2] reminds us, may be traced back to Ezekiel, viz. that "even the Gentiles who survived the judgment were to be excluded from it (the kingdom) for ever," prevailed in the first century B.C. The idea that the nations had received light from God, but had been unfaithful, and that, therefore, their punishment was morally conditioned, gave place to the idea that their rejection was to be traced to God's arbitrary decree.

[1] *The Doctrine of God in the Jewish Apocryphal and Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 27.

[2] *Religious Development between the O.T. and N.T.*, p. 68.

The vision of judgment ceased to be that of the separation of men on moral principles and became the glorious vindication of Israel. The view expressed by Ben Sira, that God loves all righteous men, is hardened later into the view that He loves Israel, and even only the righteous in Israel. The judgment, once tempered by mercy, tended to become just sheer judgment, or, at the best, a judgment softened in the case of the Palestinian Jews. Even when God is called "Father" the term has reference only to righteous Israelites.[1] It is not surprising, therefore, to learn that as time went on there was a marked decline in the demand which God made on man's life, so far as the response of the heart was concerned. While the idea of an inward righteousness was never entirely wanting, the emphasis came to be put on ceremonial correctness rather than on the kind heart and the forgiving spirit. Schultz opens his discussion of Old Testament theology with the observation that Israel's assurance of salvation, that found such supreme expression in the prophets, "may be best and most clearly described . . . as an assurance of being in covenant relationship with the living God." It may be said without injustice that this earlier idea of a covenant shrank in Judaism to that of a contract. The law was the contract of co-partnery, the scribes were the intermediaries who interpreted God's will, and the Pharisee was the product. And yet it must also be said that, since Judaism was the soil out of which Christianity sprang, it cannot be held that the prophetic succession wholly failed. It is the psalter, rather than apocalyptic or the meditation of the

[1] Wicks, *The Doctrine of God, etc.*, p. 254.

sage, that belongs to the house and lineage of prophecy. The psalms, as it has been said, are the response of piety to the revelations of the prophets. They are the living witness that the word had not returned void. The psalter forbids us to say that there ever was a time when the refined gold of Israel's legacy became wholly dim.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW TESTAMENT WITNESS

In his great chapter on Augustine, Harnack[1] writes: "It has been said of Fiesole that he prayed his pictures on to the walls. It can be maintained of Augustine that his most profound thoughts regarding the first and the last things arose out of prayers; for all these matters were contained for him in God." So it may be said that the profoundest thoughts regarding God "arise" for us out of a prayer—the Lord's Prayer. The Father in Heaven, whose name is to be revered, whose kingdom is man's highest good, in the doing of whose will man fulfils his destiny and achieves his highest blessedness, is the Christian's God. The Christian man who follows his Master in the way of prayer is brought into the presence of One who is a Person, who is at once transcendent and immanent, the Heavenly Father who is present in nature as the giver of daily bread, in the moral strivings of man, and in the religious experience as the God who forgives. In the Lord's Prayer we have a witness to the experience of God and of God's relation to the world and human life on which reflection has laboured unceasingly. All the problems regarding the being, nature, and attri-

[1] *History of Dogma*, vol. v. p. 106.

butes of God are presented by these familiar words. But the problems of reflexion are first of all the assurances of religion. "What sort of unity will the realisation of the rational ideal secure?" asks Ward.[1] "The answer may be very brief, 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' To imagine this petition answered is to imagine humanity animated by a single wise and righteous will. The will of the Many and the will of the One would accord completely." Thus philosophy to-day, in regard to what it recognises as the chief problem of speculation, seeks light in the Lord's Prayer. Here is sought the much debated "essence" of Christianity. "There is nothing in the gospels," says Harnack,[2] "that tells us more certainly what the gospel is . . . than the Lord's Prayer. . . . It shows the gospel to be the Fatherhood of God applied to the whole of life." "The Lord's Prayer is not only the central document of Christianity, but also, although not found in Mark, one of the most authentic utterances of its Founder. . . . We feel ourselves here standing on the bedrock of Christianity."[3] It is strange that Mr Gardner[4] should add to these words a statement like the following: "We may attribute personality to God if we please, but it is throwing out words at what is far too vast to be enclosed by words. And if the term personality be taken as a counter in a logical game, we may easily be led by it into utter absurdities." But there cannot surely be anything casual or arbitrary in attributing personality to God

[1] *Realm of Ends*, p. 136.
[2] *What is Christianity?* p. 67.
[3] Gardner, *Growth of Christianity*, p. 5.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

if we accept the Lord's Prayer as the bedrock of Christianity? It is not a question of "throwing out" a word at a magnitude that baffles thought, but of taking the words "Our Father" as expressing the deepest conviction in the life of Jesus, and forming the most adequate confession of Christian faith. We may not, then, if we accept the Lord's Prayer, attribute personality to God "if we please"; we must attribute it if we are to regard the experience which the prayer expresses as possessed of validity. The fact that the term personality may be made a counter in a logical game does not impair its significance in the sphere of religion, where, indeed, the introduction of mere spatial concepts of vastness only leads to confusion.

It is often said that there is a sense in which it may be held that there is nothing new in Jesus' doctrine of God. The legacy of Israel is taken over. The unity, personality, and spirituality of God are not discussed. They are never in question. Yet it is nevertheless true that the five talents bequeathed by Israel gain five talents more. For the word "Father" on the lips of Jesus is a new word, simply because Jesus was what He was. It is a new designation or revelation of God; in depth of meaning, wealth of content, and significance for man's life, it ushers us into a new world. There are few questions less worth discussing than the question of what is called the "originality" of Jesus, save to note the new attitude that time has brought. A representative Jewish thinker, Mr C. G. Montefiore,[1] in his frank and reasonable chapter on "The Nature of God" in the volume entitled *The Religious Teach-*

[1] *Religious Teaching of Jesus*, p. 85.

ing of Jesus, freely admits that we must no longer set isolated sentences from the gospels over against detached sayings of the Rabbis, but must seek the originality of Jesus' teaching in "its general character, its spirit, its atmosphere," and also in the note of authority that distinguishes it. "The teaching of Jesus is more than its *disjecta membra* ; it is a whole ; it is a spirit." It is not enough to say of Jesus that He touched nothing without adorning it, for adornment suggests the merely external. We must say that He touched nothing without transforming and recreating it. In His teaching we have a "transvaluation of values." There is no more serious challenge of this claim in behalf of Jesus than that offered by the "thorough-going" eschatological school. It is contended by this school that the apocalyptic element in the gospels, which "Liberal" theologians, who emerged with such influence from the critical movement of last century, regarded as negligible, or as capable of being explained as a concession on the part of Jesus to the popular view, belongs to the very texture of the teaching. Jesus shared the hopes of His time regarding the immediate and catastrophic consummation of the kingdom. He looked for no other kingdom than that which men expected who were nourished on the apocalypses, and construed His own relation to the kingdom in no other way than that marked out by the conventional thought of the age. The virtues, therefore, which He inculcated were those of an *Interimethik*, virtues appropriate to men waiting for the catastrophe. We have no ground for saying that Jesus saw through or beyond the apocalyptic expectations of His time or brought to bear on these a criticism engendered

on a higher level of insight. The records show Him to have been the true child of His time. He expected the kingdom to come, the new order to break in, within His own generation; He died in the belief that He would return in the clouds as the Son of Man to judge the world. Undoubtedly, such contentions create a serious situation for theology. "We must all agree," says a recent writer,[1] "that unless some consensus of opinion among Biblical critics justifies us in denying the authenticity of certain of the sayings of Jesus, we shall find this attack upon our citadel the most dangerous in history. For even now things sidereal continue as they were since the beginning of creation." Liberal theology may not always have succeeded in doing justice to Jesus. But it made Him a great and impressive figure, in tragic conflict with the ideas and hopes of His age. Thoroughgoing eschatology would seem to present Him bound hand and foot by the limitations of His age. Can we accept this? May we not admit the value of recent research in the gospels without feeling bound to acquiesce in all the conclusions? The fact that many points are still, and are likely for long to be, keenly disputed warrants one's caution. To deny that Jesus, though the child of His age, transcended His age, is to refuse Him a place with the world's great men. It is, further, to ascribe the rise of the Christian Church and Christian civilisation to other forces than those He set agoing. It is impossible to read the gospels, now at any rate, without being impressed by the apocalyptic element: it is equally impossible to doubt that the world in which Jesus lived was

[1] *Hibbert Journal*, Oct. 1910.

more spacious and comprehensive than that which apocalyptic unveils. In order to safeguard the independence and mastery of Jesus it has been held that certain apocalyptic passages in the gospels, of the more characteristic and cruder sort, are to be regarded as later importations. But even if we decline this way of escape, and it is impossible to enter here into the critical questions which this proposal raises, it may still be maintained that there is that in the gospels which transcends the eschatological category. If this be denied, then we have in Jesus one who was tragically mistaken as to God's purposes with men. It is no longer incumbent on us in the interests of faith to regard Jesus as the depositary of all knowledge, but it is incumbent on us to assign determinative value to His interpretation of God and of God's ways with men. To say with Schweitzer[1] that Jesus "belonged to His own time and cannot be transported into ours," to feel that instead of finding in His message elements that belong to "the celestial everywhere and for ever," we must relate it to "the preposterous then and there," is to acknowledge that a crisis has arisen for faith.

We are surely not driven, however, at this time of day to any conclusion so depressing. We cannot equate the thought of Jesus with apocalyptic. Even Schweitzer seems conscious of this at the close of this famous book. Jesus came neither as a teacher nor as a casuist, but as "an imperious ruler." If He thought of Himself as the Son of Man, that title "was only the temporally conditioned expression of the fact that He was an authoritative ruler. . . .

[1] *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 401.

He comes to us as One unknown, as of old by the lakeside He came to the men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word : 'Follow thou Me,' and sets us the tasks He has to fulfil in our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the trials, the conflicts, the sufferings they shall pass through in His fellowship, and as an ineffable mystery they shall learn in their experience who He is." It is obvious that there is here assigned to Jesus a permanent significance for life which is quite meaningless if He lived and thought under the literal domination of apocalyptic ideas. If there can be fellowship with Jesus amid the tasks and trials of the present hour, if we can speak of Him coming to us to-day clothed with authority, there must have been some transcendent abiding element in His message. He who was adequate to the great task of fulfilling the law and the prophets must have been able in freedom and independence of soul to pass beyond the confines of apocalyptic. If apocalyptic was the frame-work of Jesus' message it enclosed a work that was for all time.

The important question is not so much as to the expectation of the imminent coming of the kingdom, but as to the nature of the kingdom that was to come. The two questions, it is true, are not unrelated. For even within the framework of the hope that the kingdom would come in His generation, Jesus presented an aspect of the kingdom that is of permanent value—its transcendent aspect. The kingdom was to come ; it was to break in suddenly, revealing itself as a new and higher order ; it was at

hand. There is here expressed a necessary thought about the kingdom of God. It is not the result of human effort, the creation of man's wisdom or goodness. The faith in the kingdom, like faith in God, has an objective reference. Neither the kingdom nor God Himself is an hypothesis to cover our ignorance, but a reality on which faith rests and to which it responds. On the level of Christian experience this is an indispensable conviction. The thought, then, of the sudden breaking in of the kingdom may be said to embody the deeper thought of the kingdom's transcendence.[1] It is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom. With this thought of the transcendence of the kingdom—which may be said to be the thought of its objective reality—the further thought of Jesus as to its nature is in accord. It was a spiritual kingdom He conceived of, a kingdom that could become immanent in the life of man, a Reign or Rule of God in which the righteous and loving will of God is the supreme law. To equate the petitions "Thy kingdom come" and "Thy will be done" is to realise that, however dependent Jesus was on current modes of expression, He revealed the presence of a new insight. Further, the impression we get that this transcendent kingdom had actually become for Jesus immanent, that the virtues He inculcated were not mere regulations for a period of waiting but actual embodiments of the spirit of the kingdom, compels the conviction of His mastery of the apocalyptic element. The righteousness that was to exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees was the actual condition of entering the kingdom, of realis-

[1] See Scott, *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, chap. viii.

ing its presence and coming into communion with its life. From this point of view it is seen that the thought of futurity really embodies the thought of the superlative worth of the kingdom. What is projected forward in the time series is really lifted up in the scale of values. Put in modern fashion, the kingdom as Jesus presented it was an ideal which at the same time was intensely real. Real, it made possible, even as He spoke, the life of righteousness, of faith and inward obedience, which is the life of the kingdom ; ideal, it lifted high the hearts of the faithful in hope of a richer realisation of that life.

Jesus' conception of the kingdom, as ethical and spiritual, is bound up with his conception of God. To say that the kingdom was for Him nothing more than the kingdom of apocalyptic tradition would seem to involve the further statement that His experience of God was on the level of that tradition. But that cannot be maintained for a moment. The kingdom was the kingdom of the Father, and through His unfolding of the ideas of the kingdom Jesus expressed His consciousness of the Father. Jesus' relation to God makes it impossible to speak of passive adherence to the ideas of the time. Nothing shows this more strikingly than the way in which He related the distinctively apocalyptic idea of the Son of Man to the great prophecy of the Suffering Servant. In the idea of the Son of Man who came to give His life as a ransom, Jesus resumed that way of the Cross that had opened up before the eyes of one of Israel's greatest prophets as the way of life and power. In doing so He spiritualised and deepened, indeed He transformed, the current conception of the Messiah. No doubt Jesus believed Himself to be the Messiah.

But that faith was no mere passive acceptance of a traditional rôle. Since it was the faith of Jesus it was creative. In a well-known phrase Von Dobschütz has expressed a judgment on this much debated eschatological question which has appealed to many. In Jesus' teaching concerning the kingdom, whether we consider what He taught as to the nature of the kingdom, or as to its actual presence, or as to His own relation to it, we have "transmuted eschatology." There was that in Jesus, in the depths of His inner life, that was too great to be held in thrall by the categories of His time. If there is a sense in which we may truly speak of Him as the child of His age, it must ever be remembered that the child was set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.

In a recent discussion[1] of Jesus' conception of God stress is laid on the absence of the theoretic element in the teaching. "Upon the theoretic side, then, there seems to me nothing novel or original in the teaching of Jesus. . . . We may, I should imagine, be fairly sure that Jesus never pondered over the nature of God except as regards God's relation to men. What God is in Himself would be a problem that never crossed His mind, or which to Him at any rate was not a problem at all." And again:[2] "Jesus was not a philosopher . . . God's nearness was felt by Jesus directly with a vivid intensity unsurpassed by any man, but I doubt whether the divine omnipresence in any theoretic sense ever presented itself to his mind." There is no difficulty in admitting such contentions. The contribution of theory to the doctrine of God is

[1] Montefiore, *Religious Teaching of Jesus*, Lect. iv.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

of little value for the religious life, and there could be nothing more barren or scholastic than a theoretic discussion of the divine omnipresence. Speculation on "What God is in Himself"—so far as we can attach any meaning to the question at all—is the sure way to the region of abstractions where even the *visio dei*, won after a long process partly intellectual and partly ascetic, seems to involve the surrender of personal values. "Faith," says Häring,[1] "regards as inadequate its knowledge of God with reference to the mode of this personal inner life of the Godhead, the psychological conditions, so to speak, of its course." But the abstract regions are unknown to the gospels. It is in the realm of feeling and practice that Jesus meets with us as He speaks of the Father. If we may speak of a more specifically theoretic side of the teaching, it is to be sought in the doctrine of providence. "The value of Christianity," it has been said,[2] "in the historical development of natural theology does not, in the first place, lie in any addition it makes to the conception of God, but rather in the experiential demonstration it may give of the factual reality or truth of that idea. In that sense it claims to be the revelation of God, whereby, instead of being an objective aim of worship, or an idea underlying all intelligence, He is realised and present as the light and life and love of all that lives and is." What may be called the theoretic element in Jesus' doctrine of providence is implicit rather than expressly set forth. The central declaration is that God cares for men as their Father. It is the heavenly Father that knows their needs, even of the

[1] *The Christian Faith*, p. 333.
[2] Wallace, *Natural Theology and Ethics*, p. 42.

common things of life. And the acceptance of this assurance by a living faith carries with it the conviction that this divine and intimate care for men is absolutely efficient. The belief in God's love is not deduced from any general doctrine of God as creator and upholder of the world, rather it is in the light of God's Fatherly love that the world is revealed as under God's governance. It is the Father who is Lord of heaven and earth, and who reveals the deep things to simple and faithful souls. In the perfect confidence in God with which a life goes forward on the way of duty and even of suffering there is implicit a complete *Weltanschauung*, a view of the world as standing in a certain relation to God, and as existing for certain great ends. If religion be faith in the conservation of values, then this supreme value, the loving will of God, energises in a world fundamentally in accord with that will. Christian faith implies a Theodicy. It assumes that a host of problems that arise for reflexion are soluble, are indeed solved. The statement that God is love does "not in any measure weaken the conviction that He is absolutely exalted above the world and has dominion over it. Any impression that our God may be a good but impotent will, a moral genius without being master of the world, destroys the roots of all religious power."[1]

It is implicit, then, in Jesus' presentation of the thought of God as Father that the love which reveals itself in what may be called the details of life is an omnipotent love. Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without God. God clothes the grass of the field. The homeliness with which this intimate care

[1] Häring, *Christian Faith*, p. 347.

of the Father is described does not at once suggest far-reaching thoughts as to God's rule over the world. But we come to see that the very intimacy of the divine ministry is itself the great significant fact. Nature is under the Father's control. The thought is not, in Goethe's words, that "the God who stands in immediate union with nature may be looked upon as the proper God," but rather, that the God who stands in gracious relation to man's life has nature at His command for effecting His purposes. Man is above nature. He is of more value than many sparrows. To man's faith there is open the world of revelation, and to man, as capable of the response of faith to the unveiling of the Father's will of love, an absolute value attaches. The idea of God's immanence in nature, as we have it in the gospels, is not expressed, *e.g.*, by the modern words about nature being the living garment of God. It is found rather in Jesus' words about the lilies of the field, robed in a glory greater even than that of Solomon. It is a true immanence, the immanence of the artist in the product of his genius, for God touches the flowers into beauty. Yet there is no hint of any fusing of the divine life with the life of nature. The thought is of a creative will of love, whose revelation in nature is understood in the light of its purposes as regards men. "Shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith." The supreme thing for Jesus in life was the realising of this love. "The gospels present the life of God in the natural world as active on behalf of His moral and spiritual interests in human life. His control of nature permits the full growth of the human soul into His own likeness and the full

accomplishment of His redeeming purpose in this universe of pain and suffering and sin."[1]

In a discussion to which reference has been made, it is held that "the God of Jesus, like the God of Isaiah, was an outside God." The aim is to defend Judaism against the charge of conceiving God as so remote from life that His relations with men are impaired or even falsified. The writer[2] therefore feels it necessary to "lay stress on the simple transcendence or outsideness of the God of Jesus," although he emphasises no less strongly the fact that "to Jesus God was vividly near," and that Jesus had "a most intense conviction of the divine nearness." Philosophy, it is held, may have difficulty in reconciling these two affirmations about God, but practical religion has no difficulty. "Thousands of simple believers" unite these two beliefs to-day. But surely it leads to confusion to regard transcendence and "outsideness" as synonymous terms?[3] "Outsideness" expresses a thoroughly deistic idea—and there is no hint of Deism in the gospels,—whereas transcendence is an element in theistic doctrine. Transcendence is meaningless apart from immanence. In declaring that the God of Jesus is an "outside" God, Mr Montefiore is no doubt defending the doctrine of Jesus from the charge of Pantheism, and in this, of course, theology will support him. But the term is unfortunate. It seems to mean in the discussion that each personality has a life of its own, and that this fact must be affirmed of the Divine Personality.

[1] Moffatt, *Theology of the Gospels*, p. 96.
[2] Montefiore, *Religious Teaching of Jesus*, p. 89.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

But "outsideness" is a meagre term to describe this being for self which is an indispensable element in personality. For it is by "insideness," if one may use the term, that a personality reveals its character and power. He who can enter into other lives and influence them, interpreting their needs and hopes, lives the significant life. He that loseth his life shall find it. In the emphasis put on "nearness," and also on the fact that Jesus' God is One whose spirit "may be communicated" to men, this deeper truth is recognised. "Nearness," which may be further defined as the communication of a spirit, is just the immanence for which a theistic doctrine would contend. The fact which is fundamental in the theology of the gospels, viz. that of God's personality, may indeed, with a measure of accuracy, be described as the "outsideness" of God ; but the whole structure of things that the word suggests is not finally satisfying to the religious consciousness. However vividly an "outside" God may be felt to be near, the relation is not that close, intimate relation of love which reveals itself in the gospels. Bergson has taught us how misleading spatial metaphors may be in dealing with spiritual things, and when we have profound harmony of feeling, community of will, identity of purpose, the sense of a vocation being fulfilled through the power of an inward love that makes the yoke easy and the burden light, we are in a region where the terms "outsideness" and "nearness" are not adequate. A modern philosopher speaks of Jesus' "absolute and plenipotentiary freedom," and yet of His "utter realisation of the immanence of God in the present life." The former, it may be added, is the

fruit of the latter. It was as the Son that Jesus experienced that "absolute and plenipotentiary freedom." The idea finds expression in the Fourth Gospel: If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. God is immanent in life as the Father, as the Will of Love which is not merely imposed on the will of those who love and trust Him, but which, in an indefinable yet very real sense, is accepted by that will, and becomes part of the activity of those who live under His Reign. This is the immanence on which the theology of the gospels lays stress, and an ontology which cannot come into accord with this ethical experience needs revision. If the term "Mysticism" is used here, it is the Mysticism of the daylight. The most "mystical" of the gospels has no more favourite symbol than light to express at once the significance of Jesus and the nature of Christian experience.

The conclusion to which Mr Montefiore comes is that in Jesus' setting forth of the Fatherhood of God we have no new doctrine, but an "old familiar doctrine in a high degree of purity, warmth, and concentration." But a doctrine which is purified, warmed, and concentrated may be fairly regarded as a doctrine transformed. It is admitted that Judaism limited the Fatherhood of God to Israel. "Within the limitation," however, the Fatherhood was "truly and surely felt." "The inconsistency was not felt; it was ignored." "To Jesus, on the other hand, it is true that God was His Father, and the Father of those to whom He spoke and among whom He lived, in virtue of a common humanity." But if this is the essential note of the Divine Fatherhood, that God is the Father of men because they are men,

and if faith may spring up anywhere in recognition of this fact—"I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel"—then to limit the range of the Fatherhood is surely to miss its secret. Such limitation would seem to carry with it more than "inconsistency." "Inconsistency" suggests that the true doctrine of the Fatherhood was known, although there was a failure in some way to do justice to it. But it must be held, on the other hand, that Jesus lifts us to a new plane of experience, and, instead of merely rectifying an inconsistency of Judaism, gives a fresh disclosure of God. Fatherhood means what it did not mean before. The new meaning is bound up with Jesus Himself, with His personality, His consciousness, His sense of His vocation, and suggests questions that cannot be dealt with here. We have more than a teaching which can be regarded as the revision and expansion of current doctrine; we have a new life bringing a new gift to men. "The distinctive factor in Christianity," writes Moffatt,[1] "is not that He taught God was the Father of men, but that God was His Father; it was in virtue of this unique consciousness of Sonship that He called men to come to Him and learn the secret of Sonship. . . . The teaching of Jesus on this point cannot be severed from His personality and vocation." It may be reasonably urged that had the truth of the Divine Fatherhood been realised adequately in Judaism, *i.e.* in the region of the personal life, the limitation to Israel would have been transcended. That it was not so realised, the more or less abstract terms applied to God—"The Highest," "The Blessed," "The Name," "Heaven"

[1] *Theology of the Gospels*, p. 99.

—amply show. The word "Father" on Jesus' lips indicated that life had entered into a new relation to God, or, which is saying the same thing, that a new revelation of God had been granted. The new relation carried with it a new ethic and a new religion.

The relation may be described as the righteousness of the kingdom. "A just man," said Plato, "will not differ from a just state, so far as the idea of justice is involved, but the two will be alike." The Platonic idea of justice, as the condition of the soul's harmonious activity, and also of the efficiency of the state, may illustrate the New Testament idea of the righteousness of the kingdom. The Reign of God, as Jesus conceived it and realised it, may be said to mean a just man in a just state. In the kingdom are found the conditions, the atmosphere, in which a spiritual being realises the true life. As Moffatt puts it, righteousness is not merely a "requirement" of the kingdom; it is the kingdom—the Father's rule accepted by a life. Hence the relation is marked by directness, spontaneity, and happiness. The kingdom of God is first of all righteousness, then peace and joy in the spirit. Its worship is that of spirit and truth. The relation of the members is controlled by the Father's will of love. To live under the Rule of a God who makes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and who will have mercy and not sacrifice, to realise that Rule is to have the spirit of forgiveness in one's breast. Mr Montefiore quotes the saying from the parable (Luke xvii.), "We are slaves. We have merely done that which it was our duty to do," as showing that in Jesus' teaching the relation of

master and servant is not excluded. But even if, with most recent editors, we leave out the word "unprofitable," the point of the parable may be held to be that there is no stage at which the member of the kingdom can say that his service has met the demands of the kingdom. The kingdom is indeed one of duty, but even that august word does not exhaust the relation between the members of the kingdom and the God of the kingdom. The parable may be said to bring out not the burdensomeness of service in the kingdom, but its idealism, the sense of an infinite obligation. But love alone can awaken that sense. It is at a point like this that we feel how the teaching of Jesus was enforced by His life. "What He was and did," it has been said,[1] "is of more consequence than what He said. There is contained in that life more proof that God is, than all other approaches of God to man, or of man to God." It is in Jesus' life and service that the righteousness of the kingdom stands revealed. The idea of duty is not great enough as an interpretive idea for that life. We are carried into the region of communion and sacrifice. It is an illuminating remark by Moffatt that in Jesus' answer to Peter's remonstrance at Cæsarea Philippi (Mark viii. 30 f.) we have a highly significant declaration of the Master's mind regarding the Divine Will. "If there is anything in the gospels that was certainly not invented it is the story of Peter rebuking Jesus" (Denney).[2] The arresting words are these: "Begone, thou Satan, thy thoughts are man's not God's." That, for Jesus, the thought of God concerning Him

[1] Gould, *N.T. Theology*, p. 14.
[2] Denney, *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 329, note.

did not exclude the Cross as the fulfilment of the Divine Will, can only mean that He conceived the love of God as having at its heart the passion of sacrifice. The "Thy will be done" of the dark hour in Gethsemane is already spoken at Cæsarea Philippi—near the grotto of Pan and under the shadow of Cæsar's temple.[1] In a place consecrated to pleasure and power, Jesus, as the fulfiller of righteousness, the righteousness of the kingdom, speaks of the Cross. What God's Reign means is here disclosed ; only the Cross can seal these words and embody the thought of God. It is in the light of such an insight into the mind of God, and of such an acceptance of His Will, that the adequacy of that great expression of the consciousness of Jesus is seen : "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father : and no one knoweth the Son save the Father ; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." It has been remarked by the late Principal Denney[2] that "if we knew nothing whatever about Jesus apart from this utterance it might well seem staggering, but we cannot forget as we read it all that we have already passed in review." Attempts have been made to minimise the statement, and to deny its genuineness. But, accepting the words as authentic, it is to be noted that they were spoken at a moment of profound joy and of utter humility. The joy finds voice in thanksgiving to the Father who is Lord of heaven and earth. And the thanksgiving is for a gift no less than this, the revelation of the fact that the

[1] See Moffatt, *Theology of the Gospels*, p. 10.
[2] *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 270.

love which is supreme in the universe is not won by wisdom but bestowed in grace, and realised just by the acceptance of it, as a child accepts the love of its mother. Here, we venture to think, is the note of utter humility. Is it strange or incredible that One who saw that the secret of the universe was this, One upon whom this splendour and glory had broken, should add, "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father"? It may be strange to those who come to the words with minds harassed by the thought of later doctrinal controversies. But if we take the words simply, as the utterance of the world's Greatest at one of His great moments, is it incredible that they should express the consciousness of One who knew Himself to be held securely in the grasp of the Divine purpose, and who accepted in exaltation and humility the tremendous vocation which that knowledge involved? "It is idle," says Dr Denney,[1] "to ask whether the Sonship of Jesus here spoken of is Messianic or ethical or metaphysical." Christian theology may freely use all these terms. For there was the realising of a vocation that meant the identifying of the will of Jesus with that of the Father. And, as for the term "metaphysical," we need not shrink from it if it means for us that the structure of things cannot be divorced from the values, and that at that great moment Jesus was not weaving the web of dreams but announcing an insight into the very reality of the universe. "There is nothing in the New Testament," writes Dr Denney,[2] "which carries us further than this, and nothing more is

[1] *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 276.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 272.

wanted to justify completely the attitude of Christian faith to Jesus." From the present point of view it may be said also that there is nothing in the New Testament which carries us further in our quest for light on Jesus' doctrine of God. The Personality, Absoluteness, and Love of God are here disclosed.

The New Testament witness throughout is unshaken in its loyalty to the great Witness. It corroborates the testimony of Jesus, since its attitude to Him is one of faith. The New Testament is a book sensitive to many influences that were at work in the world when Christianity began its career ; it yields many points of view, since the new faith was one that quickened and liberated men's minds in regard to the greatest questions ; as a record of experience it is no flat chronicle, but full of character and life. Men speak in it with the freshness and distinction that are born of great emotional crises. Yet beneath all the variety there is the unvarying testimony that these men, through Christ, had found God and been found of God in an experience that affected their life to the very centre. It may readily be admitted that the Christian religion even from the first was committed to men who did not wholly succeed in scaling its heights and sounding its depths. But there is surely something of perversity in concluding from this, as certain lines of modern study would seem to lead us to do, that we have to search diligently even in the New Testament for Christianity. The New Testament has been given over to the critics as no other book has ever been. It has been cross-examined with pitiless rigour. But the testimony stands. To whatever extent we find later

views wedded to earlier narratives, and the surrounding thought-world supplying ideas that refracted the light of the Christian message, the witness is unfaltering that God had shined in the heart to give the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

In the New Testament we see the new faith adjusting itself to the spiritual forces already in the field. We see action and reaction. This is an aspect of the matter to which Professor E. F. Scott directs attention in his *Apologetic of the New Testament.*[1] In the literature of Christianity from the first the apologetic interest may be traced. While Church History distinguishes a given period as "The Age of the Apologists," it is to be remembered that Christianity from the first was "called on to defend itself against misunderstandings and bitter opposition." It is possible, therefore, for us to "distinguish the underlying principles of the New Testament defence," principles which revealed themselves in the conflict with Judaism, Paganism, and Gnosticism. The New Testament may be regarded as the first chapter in the still incomplete volume of interpretation—supplying us, not with "an apology ready-made," but with "principles which each successive time must re-interpret and apply for itself in accordance with its own peculiar needs." [2]

From this point of view the apostle Paul is of decisive importance. Paul's relation to the philosophical and religious ideas of his age raises one of the great questions of modern theology. That a mind like his was alive at every point to the serious

[1] *Apol. of N.T.*, p. 233.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 215.

thinking and spiritual aspirations of his time cannot be doubted. This does not mean, however, that we can proceed to explain a man like Paul—any more than we can explain an Amos, *e.g.*—in terms of his environment, unless we bring God into that environment. It pleased God to reveal His Son in Paul. Paul's life-problem found its solution in Jesus Christ. We are face to face in Paul with what has been happily called "the power of an experience," [1] and the measure of that power is the measure of his reaction on the ideas in the midst of which he grew up. He was a citizen of two worlds—the world of Judaism and of Hellenism—before he found himself in the world that Christ disclosed. And notwithstanding the declaration that he was "an Hebrew of the Hebrews and as touching the law a Pharisee," it is to be remembered that the Judaism he knew had not maintained itself in isolation. "The contact of Orientalism with Judaism on its speculative and popular side in the Diaspora," writes Moffatt,[2] "is independent of and prior to the rise of Christianity." Judaism was affected also by influences from the West. The pilgrim philosopher was a well-known figure in Tarsus, and Stoic, Cynic, Neo-Pythagorean, and Platonic tenets were subjects of frequent discourse. It is not necessary to regard Paul as a professional philosopher to conclude that he had the profoundest interest in the great thoughts that the mind of Greece had elaborated regarding the nature of the world and the purpose of man's life therein. The vigorous piece of polemic against a form of Gnosticism—in the epistle to the Colossians—in

[1] W. M. Macgregor, *Christian Freedom*, chap. iii.
[2] *Introduction to Literature of N.T.*, p. 153.

which Paul claims for Christ a cosmical significance, shows that he was ready when occasion called to present Christianity as a *Weltanschauung*.

As regards the doctrine of God, illustrations of Paul's apologetic interest may be found in the first chapter of Romans and in the Areopagus address in Acts (xvii. 23–28). In the former passage, speaking of "that which may be known of God," the apostle appeals to what we should call to-day Natural Religion. There is *no* "inherent impotence of men to know the things of God."[1] On the contrary, these things "are plain to them; God Himself has made it plain — for ever since the world was created, His invisible nature, His everlasting power and divine being, have been quite perceptible in what He has made." It may be said that Paul is here on Old Testament ground, yet the relation of his thought to that of his age is evident. According to a Stoic treatise, God, "though invisible to all mankind, is seen from His very works"; and the Stoic doctrine, that the moral life in man is obedience to the law implanted in him by nature and God, reminds one of the apostle's reference to the "unwritten law." Johannes Weiss[2] has noted the significance of this line of argument in Paul, and expressed the view that "in our age of Natural Science it is destined to play a new rôle," adding, that "notwithstanding that certain modern theological points of view, as, for example, Ritschl's, regard this conception as something of minimum worth or as an illusion, it cannot be denied that for many there is here a way to God which we

[1] T. H. Green, *Works*, vol. iii. p. 230 ff.
[2] *Amer. Journ. of Theology*, vol. xvii. pp. 352–367.

should carry to completion." On the other hand, it has been held that "Paul's theme in the first chapter of Romans is substantially that of Kant, that the spiritual verities, although they cannot be logically grounded, are yet given as the ultimate presuppositions of the practical reason."[1] But as the same writer declares that "it is true as much as ever that God is the necessary postulate to make the world intelligible," and, further, that "the denial of Him involves sooner or later the bankruptcy of thought as well as the dissolution of all moral obligation," the points of view are not so far apart as one might at first suppose. For Paul, the argument from nature is not a purely logical one—not the abstract cosmological argument from effect to cause. It is rather a presentation of the religious view of nature. It is uttered on the level on which Carlyle could speak of the "God-written Apocalyse of Nature." And in the speech at Athens we have another example of the same great appeal. The use of the term *τό θεῖον* instead of *θεός*, and the emphasis on the Divine immanence, have been taken as evidence of Paul's sympathy with Stoic doctrine and as indicating a pantheistic strain in his thinking. But Christian theology need not fear the "Higher Pantheism," and the presence of a "mystical" element in Paul's thinking is not to be denied. It is always, however, the ethical element that holds Pantheism in check. And in Paul the revelation in nature is closely bound up with the revelation in conscience. The "reason," to which the glory of the world is unveiled, is also the organ of that "law of the mind" which attests

[1] E. F. Scott, *Apologetic of N.T.*, p. 245.

God's presence in man's moral life. It is a faculty of moral and intellectual insight into a universe where there is no final discord between meaning and value.

But, after full allowance is made for the intellectual influences at work in Paul's mind, it is beyond doubt that his thinking about God was determined by his relation to Jesus. His testimony rose to its height in the confession of God as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." This confession on Paul's lips may be said to include all that Christian theology has to affirm about God, even as it summed up the apostolic testimony. Paul's experience on the way to Damascus eludes analysis, but what happened in that great hour revolutionised his whole way of thinking and feeling about God and interpreting God's mind and purpose in relation to men. This new conviction about God, wrought in the apostle by his surrender to Christ, had a controlling and determining effect. Paul's attitude to the law, his view of history and of providence, his conception of righteousness and of justification, the contrast between faith and works, were all the fruit of his transformed conviction regarding God. It is impossible to speak with any certainty of the stages of Paul's experience that led up to the decisive moment; and of the cryptic utterance regarding his determination to know Christ no longer after the flesh, it is, perhaps, only allowable to say that it did not mean indifference to the life and teaching of Jesus. But whatever were the inward conflicts of Saul of Tarsus, when the light broke upon him and he acknowledged the Lordship of Jesus he found himself in a world

constructed, if one may use the mode of expression, on principles totally different from those that ruled in the world of the Pharisee. Through Christ Paul became conscious of a good so great that it was not dependent on man's merit. It could only be regarded as a gift. Hence his central thought about God is that of the divine grace, the response to which is faith. Paul was led to this conviction along the way of moral experience. It is the truly religious attitude towards the universe, an attitude which the man of science and the artist may share. For the universe, whose meaning cannot be compassed by man's thought, has a beauty and value that cannot be measured by man's effort or achievement. To one to whom this revelation is given, as to Paul, in the region of conscience, the word will be, "By the grace of God I am what I am." His testimony will be that he has obtained mercy, that God has shined in his heart, the God who is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. In a universe where God spares not His own Son, where love takes up the burden of transgression and bears the Cross, there is no longer any "glorying" on the part of man on the ground of his achievements ; he glories only in the Cross that has brought emancipation and power. Nothing can explain Paul save this, that Christ had revealed to him a new world, where he could, so to speak, for the first time breathe freely ; a world with things worth living and suffering and dying for, where a service was disclosed that claimed every atom of man's devotion and strength. It was the world of God's grace. Everything in Paul's Christology, soteriology, and ethics was determined by this new

conviction about God. It explains his attitude to Christ.

It is a remark of Johannes Weiss[1] that "Paul's faith in Christ and his Christ mysticism, if accurately interpreted historically, will always seem foreign to many modern Christians," for "Paul's relation to the exalted Lord is a thoroughly supernatural one." But the relation of any one life to another by which it has been profoundly influenced is "a thoroughly supernatural one." To read into Paul's "mystical" relation to Christ a strictly ethical meaning is not to reduce the value of that relation or lessen its wonder. When Weiss comes to the passage in which the "Christ mysticism" is most strikingly expressed, he notes that to the words, "My ego no longer lives; Christ lives in me," the apostle immediately adds the interpretation, "but the life that I now live in the flesh I live in faith on the Son of God, who has loved me and given Himself up for me." Weiss rightly finds in the interpretation what is most characteristic of Paul's thinking. "Instead of the mystic formula there appears the language of the I-and-thou religion." If the famous Pauline formula, "In Christ," indicates the influence of Hellenistic conceptions of man's relation to deity, it is safe to say that these conceptions, in taking their place in Paul's experience, had been completely mastered. The faith in which Paul lived was no ecstatic blending of one life with another, in which the outlines of personality were blurred. It was an experience in which Paul found himself, which liberated all his powers and raised them to the highest pitch of activity. It is perhaps enough to say that the

[1] *Amer. Journ. of Theology*, vol. xvii. pp. 361 ff.

formula "In Christ" meant that for Paul the relation to Christ was no formal or accidental one, but vital and inevitable. It was his destiny. Weiss finds in Paul's doctrine of the spirit a pantheistic Stoic element—"the personal representation of God and Christ is on the point of being dissipated into the pantheistic conception of a divine fluid or Stoic world soul." This, it is added, is a "conception we can no longer appropriate." For us to-day to speak of having the spirit of God is to think of "a strengthening, purifying, and exaltation of the powers of our own soul, gained through prayer, or through the steadfast exercise of volitional faith in God." But surely when Paul says "the Lord is the spirit," he speaks on a level where Pantheism is excluded, and, it may be added, a level on which Christian experience to-day may realise its essential harmony with that of an earlier age. Paul's thought of God, whether as transcendent or immanent, was inseparable from his experience of Christ. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, winning the world to the conviction of His love and grace. The place that Paul assigned to Christ is the place that a faith will ever assign to Him, which acknowledges that apart from Him the full and final truth about God would not have been known. Such a faith will express its sense of the value of Christ in forms of speech appropriate to its age. But the underlying meaning will be the same. The doctrine of God expressed will be Pauline in this sense, that it will be an interpretation of the significance of the word "Father" as that word fell from the lips of Jesus. It will be a doctrine in which Love, as the very essence and secret of

personality, will be placed upon the throne of the universe, and invested with absolute sovereignty. The sovereignty is construed absolutely through grace and love. "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own son, how shall He not freely with Him also give us all things?" Here we have expressed what Weiss has called Paul's "fundamental religious feeling." It is the secret of that glorying, that καύχησις, that joyful confidence which Luther rendered as "daring" towards God. It was the pride of one who was not ashamed of his gospel, who was proud that the world was such as Christ revealed it to be. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith comes to us with the marks of controversy upon it. But at heart it presents another aspect of the glorying. It is Paul's way of transmitting the message of Jesus in the gospel, that it is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom.

In Paul's confession of God, then, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have expressed a conviction of faith that maintained itself victoriously amid all the influences that wrought in his life. The inwardness, exaltation, and ecstasy that marked Paul's experience were due to the fact that through Christ he had come to know God, not as mediated through the law but as revealed in grace. That revelation had solved for him the most painful problem of his moral life, and disclosed the true relation in which a soul may stand to God. What the law could not do, *i.e.*, bring a life into that relation to God which satisfies its deepest needs, God had done by sending His son. The conviction that lies embedded among the Pauline forms of expression is thus a thing wonderfully simple and great. It

enables us to understand what he meant by the righteousness of faith, and by faith itself, as the inspiration of true obedience and as working itself out in a life of glowing devotion to God's kingdom. And it explains the exalted category under which he thought of Jesus, for without Jesus he would not have known this great thing about God.

Paul's influence lives in the Johannine testimony. "John is influenced by Paul in his whole attitude to the Christian revelation." The Pauline formula, "In Christ," may be set alongside of the affirmation in the Johannine epistle, "We are in Him that is true, even in His son Jesus Christ," or the statement of the Fourth Gospel, "I in them and thou in Me." These statements express experiences essentially the same, in their witness to God as the Father with whom there may be the closest communion, and to Jesus as the Revealer of God, apart from whom the communion could not have been realised.

In the Fourth Gospel Jesus is conceived under a higher, or, at any rate, stricter category than Paul made use of. In Paul's use of the designation, "Son of God," we have a "purely religious judgment on the relation of Christ to God. Paul nowhere attempts to define that relation. He is content to think vaguely of Christ as a higher being, 'the Man from Heaven.' . . . In the Fourth Gospel Jesus is the Son of God in a strict and literal sense. He is identified with the Logos who was with God from the beginning, and partakes of the attributes and essential nature of God."[1] But while the writer of the Fourth Gospel employs a

[1] E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 50.

new category in order to set forth the significance of Jesus, a category, too, that affected in many ways his representation, the "purely religious judgment"[1] is not sacrificed to the metaphysical idea. The God who so loved the world that He sent His son is essentially the God of Paul and the Father in Heaven to whom Jesus taught men to pray.

The Logos may be described as a principle of world interpretation—a key to unlock the mystery of God and of His relation to the world and man. It is a mode of explanation employed to make the world intelligible and to meet man's moral needs and aspirations. The religious interest was never altogether absent from Logos speculation, and when a modern philosopher—Royce—writes with fervour: "We have found in a world of doubt but one assurance—but one, yet how rich! All else is hypothesis, the Logos alone is sure. The brief and seemingly so abstract word of philosophers, 'This world is the world of the Logos,' has answered our question in the one sense in which we can dare to hope for an answer. The rest is silence," he stands in what may be called the true apostolic succession in philosophy. The doctrine of the Logos is associated mainly with Philo, but it had its roots in the adventurous Greek thought of an earlier time. In Heraclitus it is the principle that holds the world together, the principle of order, in obedience to which even the change that characterises all things takes place "according to measure." With the Stoics the Logos was the spiritual principle of the world, the reason active in the world with which man's soul had a deep kinship. Philo gathered

[1] E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 51.

together all previous ideas in one impressive doctrine. His emphasis on the transcendence of God suggests Aristotle, though it must be remembered that Philo's Jewish faith would safeguard that aspect of the divine. The Stoic idea of the Logos as the divine reason of the world, and the Platonic conception of the world of ideas above the world of sense also contributed to Philo's doctrine. Further, Philo stood related to the later Old Testament thought regarding the Word of God and the Wisdom of God as divine agents in creation and in the life of man. Thus in Philo we have a strange complex of elements, presenting all the difficulties that attend an eclectic system—the attempt to "find Plato in the Law and the Law in Plato."[1]

An exposition of Philo's doctrine cannot be given here. But one or two remarks may be made in order to show how the New Testament mind reacted on his ideas. Of special interest, of course, is his doctrine of God and the success, or otherwise, of his efforts to rescue the Logos from the realm of abstraction. Harnack has noted that the significant new thing in Philo was that "the highest good, the Divine original being, is considered, though not invariably, to be above reason, and the power of comprehending it is denied to the human intellect." This was destined to "have far-reaching consequences in the future." In declaring that God is incomprehensible Philo took his stand on Old Testament ground. The Old Testament doctrine has been thus stated by A. B. Davidson: "An exhaustive communication of God cannot be made, because the creature cannot take it in." But there is a great

[1] Bigg, *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 5.

difference between asserting that God cannot be fully known, because of the wealth of the divine nature, and the assertion that He is unknowable because of some inherent impotence in man to maintain relation with the Real. And it can hardly be doubted that Philo's speculation led at times in this latter direction. This meant a failure in loyalty to the Old Testament, for, to quote Davidson again, "There is no idea" (in the Old Testament) "that what God is in truth remains far away in a transcendental background, out of which it is impossible for it to advance, or into which it is impossible for man to approach." If God is, as Philo declared, "without qualities" and beyond all predication, if all that we can affirm of Him is that He exists, the situation is not relieved by speaking of affirmations regarding God as symbols shadowing forth the truth. For if there is any approximation whatever to truth in such affirmations, the doctrine of unknowableness must be abandoned.

It is really abandoned in the doctrine of the Logos. For if the divine be pure indeterminateness, not even a Logos principle can avail to interpret it. But Philo's Logos was an interpretative and harmonising principle. Indeed, it is in the light of the Logos that the inscrutable God comes within the range of thought. Logos is both thought and utterance. On its inner side it is God's thought; on its outer side God's Word, which fashions a cosmos out of a matter eternally existing and yet evil so far as it is mere matter. The Logos is God's instrument in forming the world, and, according to Philo, the world was formed in time from a matter which stands eternally over against God.

In His essence God cannot come into relation to this second principle, but in His activity, *i.e.*, in the Logos, He imparts to it a rational order. The Logos is, therefore, the mediator between God and the world and between the world and God. It is neither created nor uncreated but eternally being created, since the inner divine reason cannot be supposed to have been ever without the potentiality of uttering itself. It is neither "unbegotten as God nor begotten as man." Philo describes the Logos as the "eldest" or "first-born Son of God," "the man of God," the "second God," the "High Priest." Nevertheless, he has all the difficulties with personality that ever beset his type of speculation. It is a remark by Chesterton that as philosophers advance towards God by the speculative method, God becomes ever more shadowy and vague ; and Philo's system gives point to the remark. Martineau holds that the question whether Philo's Logos is personal or impersonal can never be answered because "the conception of personality as now held had no equivalent in the philosophy which threw itself into the old Greek moulds of thought." And Zeller, who finds that the Stoic element, with its pantheistic implications, was determinative in Philo, concludes that his Logos "oscillates obscurely between personal and impersonal being." Philo's Logos is a personified abstraction.

It is of the deepest interest to note how the New Testament takes this elusive and really dangerous idea—dangerous, *i.e.*, to the religious and moral interest—and confronts it in the interests of faith. "How can philosophy minister to raw wounds," asks Meredith, "when we are in a raging gale of

the vexations, battered to right and left? Religion has a nourishing breast; philosophy is breastless. Religion condones offences; philosophy has no forgiveness, is an untenanted confessional: wide air to a cry in anguish." Philo's confessional was untenanted; his philosophy the "wide air" of the abstract. His thought, *e.g.*, that life reaches its consummation by passing beyond even the Logos, by rising or falling into a state of ecstasy that is beyond both reason and feeling, was one with which Christianity could never come to terms. The Fourth Gospel exhibits the fundamental contrast between Logos speculation and Christian faith in God. It is Harnack's view that, notwithstanding the Prologue to the Gospel, the influence of the Logos idea on John's thought is negligible. Such a statement, *e.g.*, as "No man can come unto Me except the Father who sent Me draw him," carries us clean away from the Philonic world of thought. Indeed the object of the Prologue may be said to heighten the contrast between the Logos speculation and the Christian message. Only "faint echoes" of the Prologue are heard in the Gospel. This view is contested by E. F. Scott as one against which "the almost unanimous voice of Johannine criticism has declared." Yet it is granted that Harnack has reminded us "of one great fact which can scarcely be emphasised too much," the fact, viz., that in John's gospel the Word is made flesh. This fact is all the more impressive even if we conclude, as against Harnack, that John did not dispose of his interest in the Logos idea in the Prologue. For it is the denial at once of Philo's dualism, of his doctrine of the divine indeterminateness, and of the

Pantheism that infects his system. In John's gospel we are in the world of life and history, where the living God reveals Himself. The very familiarity of the writer with Philonic ideas and phraseology brings out his independence. As Moffatt puts it, "The author does not find Jesus in the Logos, but the Logos in the Jesus of the Church." And if it cannot be said that his representation of Jesus is unaffected by the use of the Logos category, yet the gospel bears witness throughout to the power of Christian experience to account for itself and to safeguard its treasures.

The New Testament witness may be said to complete itself in the confession that God is love, and that he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God. If this be Mysticism, it is of the most concrete and practical kind, corroborating the Synoptic word that "he who loses his life for My sake will find it." To dwell in love, and therefore in God, is to live the intensest life. The characteristic Fourth Gospel thought of the new birth may be taken as but a confirmation of this testimony to the reality and "awarenesss" of the Christian experience. To receive the Spirit is but to realise the significance of that life and love of Jesus in which the Father revealed Himself; to be born again is to see the kingdom of God, to realise that Reign and Rule of God which was the central theme of the message of Jesus. The testimony remains unobscured amid all the influences of Hellenism and speculative theory. Just as it has been said of Paul that "he is to be judged not by what he had in common with his environment, but by what was distinctive in him," and further, that "that which constitutes

the greatness of the gospels—inwardness, belief in the Father, the worth of man's soul, love, and the close union of religion with ethics—is all vitally experienced by Paul and is freshly and insistently expounded," so it may be affirmed in general of the New Testament testimony. "On turning from a study of the Hellenistic mystery-religions we are always newly impressed by the greatness and inwardness of Pauline religion."[1] The New Testament throughout confirms the testimony. At the heart of its witness is loyalty to Jesus' message concerning the Father and the Father's kingdom.

[1] See Rudolph Knopf's article, "Paul and Hellenism," *Amer. Journ. of Theology*, Oct. 1914.

CHAPTER V

GUARDING THE DEPOSIT

Mr Balfour in his most recent volume (*Theism and Humanism*) has stated, with characteristic lucidity, the aim of the theologian in contrast to that of the philosopher, and has brought out at the same time what a theistic doctrine must seek to establish. "It is the God according to religion," he writes, "and not the God according to metaphysics whose being I wish to prove." And he adds: "When in the course of these lectures I speak of God, I mean something more than an identity wherein all differences vanish, or a Unity which includes but does not transcend the differences which somehow it holds in solution. I mean a God whom men can love, to whom men can pray, who takes sides, who has purposes and preferences, whose attributes, however conceived, leave unimpaired the possibility of a personal relation between Himself and those whom He has created." Mr Balfour is unable to see how a synthesis of these two conceptions of God may be arrived at, and we may share his perplexity. The conception of God as the identity wherein all differences vanish is one in which we cannot find a place for prayer or communion, for purposes and preferences. If such identity be the God "according to metaphysics," then metaphysics

and religion, in the Christian sense of the word, can never be brought into accord. But philosophy has not always been content with the thought of a God who is a Unity "which does not transcend the differences which somehow it holds—in solution." It has emphasised the moment of transcendence, and that too in the theoretical interest no less than in the religious, and sought in God not a blank, featureless identity but the Reality that gives meaning to the varied life of the world. It has sought this along lines of reflexion that Mr Balfour pursues with so much distinction, *i.e.*, by asking what are the implications of man's intellectual, moral, and emotional experience, refusing to believe that the rational and ethical elements in life have a fortuitous existence, or that the light of life is born of darkness. The difficulty, as Mr Balfour states it, is, as we have seen, an old and hard one. It is the difficulty of reconciling the thought of Personality with that of Absoluteness. And if one were to attempt the stupendous task of writing a history of the doctrine of God it would amount very largely to tracing in detail the interaction of these two interests—the metaphysical and the religious. Indeed it might be said of the doctrine of the Trinity that it was an effort to harmonise the philosophical and religious conceptions of God, to satisfy the interests of speculation and those of faith. One of the earliest voices of the second century declared that Christians must think of Jesus as of God (*οὕτως δεῖ ἡμᾶς φρονεῖν περὶ Ἰησοῦ ὡς περὶ θεοῦ*).[1] Thus, at the very beginning, the religious interest in theological reflection was given a prominent place, and the later history is to a great

[1] Harnack, *History of Dogma*, vol. i. p. 186, note.

extent a record of the efforts of that interest to maintain itself amid speculations that soared above the ground of history and beyond the sphere of religious experience. That there was a truly religious fervour in much of that speculation does not alter the fact that it led often to conceptions of God that gave but scant support to religion as life and practice.

Apart from the doctrine of the Trinity, says Kaftan,[1] there is no ecclesiastical doctrine of God. But, as he points out, all previous reflexion prepared the way for the Trinitarian construction, and it may be said that the Church was never doing anything else than interpreting and defining its relation to God. Reflexion on the meaning and purpose of life, on the chief good, on man's vocation in the world, on the meaning of the Christian salvation and on the relation of Jesus Christ to that salvation, on human destiny, had ever as its background and motive the supreme question of God, of the divine nature and its relation to man. Kaftan [2] has pointed out how the piety of an age affects the form in which the idea of God expresses itself. Thus, the piety of the early Church—of the world-renouncing, world-condemning type—in alliance with philosophical pessimism led to an undue emphasis of the transcendence of God. The melancholy and despair of the philosopher, it is true, were unrelieved by that vision of a higher kingdom which sustained Christian faith even as it contemplated this present evil world. Nevertheless, religion and philosophy were at one in regarding the present state of existence as incurably defective. Hence relief was sought in the thought

[1] *Dogmatik*, p. 133.
[2] See Kaftan's *Truth of the Christian Religion*, vol. i. p. 110 ff.

of a God raised above the imperfections and limitations of the time process, and conceived of as absolutely simple being. Kaftan describes this as a decisive "moment" for the idea of God in theology. There is an element here, of course, in the conception of the divine which theology must regard as indispensable, and in emphasising it the religious impulse is not wanting. Theology must affirm that God is other than the world. But in exalting Him to the realm of pure being, speculation, in its anxiety to safeguard the divine, presented a God "according to metaphysics," with whom religion could have little living contact. The reaction of the practical religious interest against this excess of speculation is seen in the line of thought taken by the Apologists of the second century. Here the thought of God as the Ground and Cause of the world, as the Providence directing the affairs of the world, the Righteousness which is the guarantee of the moral order, provided a mental atmosphere where Christianity could feel at home as it could not in the thinner air of speculation. Yet the theoretical interest endured as one of the permanent interests of life, and in the Logos doctrine men sought a means of mediating between the thought of God as Pure Being and that of God as Providence. Logos speculation was an effort to relate the One and the Many. The significance it acquired in connection with Christological doctrine is well known; as regards the doctrine of God the Logos principle was one of revelation and immanence.

In the non-fulfilment of the hope of the Parousia, as has often been pointed out, must be sought one of the chief factors in the development of Christianity.

The world, which was daily expected to come to an end, endured, and it became the task of the new religion to leaven that world. The expectation of the Parousia was gradually transformed into a faith in the power of Christ to save those won to His allegiance. Thus in the second century we find Christianity settling down in a world in which, indeed, it never felt that it possessed a continuing city, but where, nevertheless, its tasks and problems lay. And, in particular, we find the Christian doctrine of God defining itself over against speculations and theories that threatened it with dissolution. The Church conflict with Gnosticism may be compared with Philo's attempt to harmonise Old Testament ideas with Greek thought. But while Philo may be said to have failed, and to have surrendered what is distinctive in the Old Testament doctrine of God, *i.e.*, the thought of God as the highest energy of Personal Will, who acts directly on the world, the Church came forth from her conflict victorious, though bearing the marks of the struggle.

The second century is marked, as Harnack has shown, by the victory over Gnosticism and Marcion, the development of ecclesiastical doctrine, and the decay of enthusiasm, *i.e.*, of hope in the Parousia. But it would be a mistake to regard Gnosticism as deliberately set upon the destruction of Christianity, even though we accept the judgment of Bigg that it was the greatest peril that has ever menaced the faith, greater even than Arianism. In a sense Gnosticism was an attempt to work out a Christian apologetic. It was an attempt to capture Christianity in the interests of philosophy, and to present it as

a philosophy of religion. Serious motives lay at the heart of this effort. The Gnostic felt the burden of the world. He was on the quest for that insight into things that brings peace. Tertullian said of Marcion that he was a man "bewildered by the question of evil." On its theoretical side Gnosticism was engaged with problems that are still the inspiration and despair of the metaphysician. It was one long effort to grapple with the question of the One and the Many. It would be unjust to say that it lacked in genuine insights ; still, its ideal realm was far away from life and its urgent concerns. Between an unknowable God on the one hand, securely disposed of in the fortress of His perfections, and an unreal evil on the other, there was no relation possible save through a myriad of fantastic abstractions. The phantasmal descended like a mist on life and history. The dignity of the Logos was secured at the expense of the historical reality of Jesus. Instead of fleeing from the wrath to come, the higher man of Gnosticism fled from ignorance along the ascending path of Gnosis.

It was by a deep instinct that the Church felt that the wisdom spoken among the perfect of Gnosticism was not Christianity, that the imposing system of abstractions was really a cosmology and not a religion of redemption. Everything turned on the conception of God. In the Apologists, therefore, and in the early Church fathers, we find the beginnings of a theology that rehabilitates the Old Testament doctrine of God, and, as regards the Logos, begins to move in harmony with the thought of the Fourth Gospel. This theology does not discard speculation—Justin wore his philosopher's

cloak in the Christian community—but its speculation is not so much flight as the upward look from the solid ground of history and tradition. In this theology we find Christian ideas gaining power, and in the thought of God as the Absolute, in the sense that in Him must be sought the First Cause and final meaning of the world, we have a firm front presented to Gnostic speculation. In this period, too, the repelling of Marcion's fierce attack on "the old God" of the Hebrews is of great significance. Harnack is never tired of telling us that Marcion was not a philosopher but rather a "great religious character," and that we must not seek consistency in his doctrines. Gnosticism has been described as "a perversion of Paulinism"; it might be said of Marcionitism that it was an obsession of Paulinism. Yet there was something noble in the obsession. It was inconceivable to Marcion that the God of grace proclaimed by Paul could be the God of the Old Testament. The earlier God might create a world, but could not be the good God who saves men. Marcion took the Pauline contrast between flesh and spirit in a metaphysical rather than in an ethical sense. Thus, a God who could create a world was for that very reason suspect. His very power over the material argued a Demiurge rather than a God who by His goodness gives salvation to souls. The strange phenomenon of Marcionitism is explained by Harnack as the result of a Greek mind working on Pauline material. The point of interest for us is that Christian theology refuses to surrender its Old Testament heritage, or to give up its rights in the legacy of Israel. By that refusal it showed that it understood Paul as Marcion did not.

The Christian Idea of God

The Apologists presented themselves as philosophers who had found the true philosophy in Christianity. Christianity appealed to them as a "moral Theism," and as such they defended it on theoretical and practical grounds, finding in it at once an explanation of things and a way of life. Christ was a higher Socrates. The Apologists were not brought into Christianity by experiences such as Paul describes in the seventh chapter of Romans. Rather, having gone round the schools, they had found rest in the school of Jesus. They brought into the Church a philosophy that was on the way to being a religion ; it caught the glow of Old Testament prophetism and of the gospel. Their theology was therefore more significant than their Christology. The greater and intenser minds among them—*e.g.*, Justin and Tertullian—made use of the Logos category in their interpretation of Jesus. But the tendency was to handle the Logos idea in the interests of cosmology, to find in the Logos a principle of reason disclosed in nature and revelation. The Logos is subordinate to God in origin if not in essence. The trend of Christian theology in the second century was towards a doctrine of God that emphasised the knowableness while exalting the infinite wealth of the divine nature. As against a Gnosticism, ever shadowed by Agnosticism, Christian thought denied the distinction between the God of religion and the Supreme God, *i.e.*, between God and the Absolute, and likewise the distinction between the Supreme God and the God of the Old Testament. In so far as Dualism was acknowledged, it was in the ethical rather than in the metaphysical sphere. The Dualism to be overcome was in the ethical realm of freedom ; it was not ex-

plained by some ontological defect inhering in the very nature of things. Thoughts like these reveal the completeness of the victory over Gnosticism. It is a remark of Harnack that the old Catholic fathers fixed the Christian doctrine of God for succeeding centuries, and certainly, if we turn to a modern definition of Theism, we find that the same interests are contended for that moved Justin or Irenæus. The Unity and Spirituality of God, God as "the highest energy of Personal Will" (Kaftan), God the Revealer, the ground at once of nature and morality—these are the great affirmations with which Christian theology started on its way. Theology may be said to have had its rise in asserting the Sovereignty of God and the freedom of man. And in face of efforts to show that these are incompatible theology had to maintain that for it the one is impossible without the other.

As against Gnosticism, then, which was a philosophy of religion, Christian theology presented itself as an apologetic, which was also in its way a philosophy of religion, though animated by a greater loyalty to the facts of history and of religious experience. It was not at first fully conscious of its aims and was more defensive than constructive. Theology attained what might be called a constructive consciousness in Origen, the "Christian Philo," the "glorious father" who completed the work of the fluent and accomplished Clement. Clement's ideal was to raise the faith "to another and higher intellectual sphere, viz., out of the province of authority and obedience into that of clear knowledge and inward intellectual assent emanating from love to God." The object of the great Alexandrian may

be compared with that of the Hegelians in the nineteenth century. It was to interpret and expound the very idea of Christianity, to exhibit it in the clear light of knowledge as the satisfaction of the mind and the secret of peace. And if the question be asked—it arises inevitably when religion is put into the forcing house of philosophy—How did Christianity fare under this rationalising treatment? the answer may be taken from Harnack, "The goodness of God and the responsibility of man are the central ideas of Clement and the Alexandrians; they also occupy the foremost place in the gospel of Jesus Christ." The glowing piety of Clement and Origen transformed their school into a temple.

It is remarked by Hutchison Stirling that the argumentation for God—with the exception of the ontological phase of it, which arose on Christian ground under the influence of Anselm—was, on its theoretical side, substantially complete before Christian theology took it up. The Apologists and early fathers built on it. "All know this," says Irenæus, "that there is one God; for reason, that dwells in the spirit, reveals it." And Tertullian speaks of a "teaching of nature silently committed to the conscience, that is born with and born in us." The majestic contribution of the Old Testament gave life and substance to the abstract creations of philosophy, while the gospel still further invested them with deeper meaning. Still, Christian theology could not divest itself of the theoretic interest nor release itself from the fascination of the Logos idea. Indeed, there was no release from the impelling fascination of that idea until theology, at the call of Athanasius, and, wonderful to say, not at the bidding of the

theoretic interest but under the compulsion of the practical, soteriological, redemptive interest, raised the Logos above all subordination and proclaimed the Homoousion. It is a profoundly interesting reflexion that what is regarded as the boldest speculative flight of theology was motived by a practical determination to safeguard the inestimable value of Christ's gift to men. Athanasius really stood "against the world" for the simple plea that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. The plea was almost drowned by a dreadful clamour of conflicting voices. Nevertheless it stood and triumphed. The significant observation of Harnack is well known, that this decision "prevented the acute Hellenising and secularising of Christianity." Athanasius found the ship of Christian thought on "a shoreless sea," the helm in danger of being lost. "He grasped the rudder." Theology felt the need expressed by the second-century writer, to "think of Christ as of God."

Origen's work prepared the way for this conclusion. In regard to the doctrine of God, Origen built on the cosmological argument. Nature and man's life point back and up to a cause and ground adequate to explain them, a source at once of being and goodness. Origen could not rest in a pluralistic doctrine of the world. The Many demand the One, the transient the unchanging. These are abstract considerations. But Origen enriched his doctrine by constant reference to history and revelation. The First Cause is the God of the Old Testament and the God and Father of Jesus Christ. Undoubtedly in Origen's thinking the doctrine of God gathers wealth; even the subtlety of his treatment of the

nature of God, and of His relation to the world, does not obscure the powerful religious interest at work. There is a contribution to the doctrine of the divine attributes. Yet Origen remained a philosopher, and, notwithstanding his real and vivid thoughts of God, the idea of the divine as pure being clung to the mind. The influence of this idea is seen in his dealing with the question of revelation. Revelation implies a limiting of God, since pure being cannot unfold itself without, so to speak, suffering diminution. The passage from the One to the Many is a descent. Hence for Origen the Logos is the first phase of the transition from the One to the Many. The Logos is the image of God ; he is God ; his dignity is not derivative but of the essence. Yet he is eternally created by a God who eternally reveals himself. The thought would seem to be that God as revealed is less than God as He is in Himself ; a disclosure of pure being cannot be equated with that Being in its fullness, though it may be in essence. Hence since revelation is due to the causality of God, and since the Logos is the first phase of that revelation, the Logos is that which is caused. For Origen the Logos was not an impersonal influence but a personal force. He had appeared in Jesus Christ. But beyond the Logos who had appeared in Christ was the eternal Logos —a distinction that gave rise to another, that between faith and knowledge. The Christ Logos appeals to faith and is the object of religious devotion, the eternal Logos is the Gnostic object of contemplation. Origen's system was a brilliant effort to think out Christianity in terms of Neo-Platonism, which was itself at once a philosophy, a religion, and an

ethical system. For Origen, as Harnack has pointed out, the secret of Christianity, the heart of the mystery, is to be sought in a Trinity of revelation—the Son being subordinate to the Father, and the Spirit to the Son. The way by which salvation comes to men is analogous to that by which in Neo-Platonism the Original Essence is, by a process of emanation, imparted through the medium of the Nous to the soul. Yet revelation gives the very essence of God. We see Origen the philosopher intent on safeguarding the sanctity of pure being, yet compelled by the religious interest to regard human life as a sharer in that sanctity. In dealing with these superlative matters the subtle and restless mind of Origen often hovered in regions where the religious interest became dim and faint. But, on the other hand, in the stress laid on man's freedom, even to the extent of limiting the divine omniscience, and in the thought of God as perfect rather than as infinite, above all, in the insistence on the fact that God is not impassive but the compassionate Father who has the "passion of love," the Christian element asserted itself.

The effect of Origen's daring and many-sided speculations was to stimulate theological activity, both by way of imitation and reaction. In particular, his idea of the Logos as eternally created had a decisive importance. With the idea of eternal generation, as we have seen, Origen combined that of subordination. But as reflexion on the Logos began to concern itself less with the cosmological significance of the idea and more with the redemptive, less with the relation of the Logos to the world than with its relation to God, the aspect of

subordination fell into the background. Against the tendency to lose sight of the historical Christ in the mists of Logos speculation, and to distinguish between the Logos who had appeared in Christ and the eternal Logos, we have in Athanasius and Augustine the declaration that Christ is the Logos. The idea of the Logos is replaced by that of the Son, and thereby gains a wealth of content that the idea as a product of speculation did not possess. It is Harnack's judgment that, while the critics of this tendency had right on their side, they failed because they had a lower conception of Christianity. Looking back, one seems to see that the Logos idea had either to be abandoned entirely or to reach the consummation it did reach in Athanasius. Perhaps it could not be abandoned. It was the category by means of which the men of the early centuries did their higher thinking, and was indispensable, just as the category of evolution might be said to be indispensable to-day. In Origen, the speculative possibilities of the idea had been well-nigh exhausted. It remained, in order to save Christianity from becoming a philosophy on the one hand, or a moralism with a deistic background on the other, to capture the Logos idea in the interest of Christianity as a religion of redemption. It is Kaftan's judgment that the acceptance of the Logos idea involved a "revision" of Christian faith which obscured the original. Paul, with his central conviction of God's grace revealed in Christ, needed no such idea, and even in the Fourth Gospel the Logos doctrine appeared, so to speak, incidentally. There is only a "leaning" on the idea; the governing thought is the perfect revelation of God in Christ,

and if salvation is spoken of as knowledge, it is a saving knowledge that is indistinguishable from love. Thus in the Fourth Gospel we are in line with the Synoptic Gospel of the kingdom. The significant point is that an idea which was merely incidental to the latest expressions of New Testament doctrine became determinative as the starting-point of subsequent thought. While this may be granted, and while it must be admitted that the influence of Logos speculation was to diminish the sense of historical values and to subordinate the moral or practical element in religion, it cannot be doubted that the work of Athanasius conserved, in the only form which the intellectual conditions of the age permitted, the gift of Christianity to mankind. The testimony of Irenæus that the Creator God and the Redeemer God are one, and that the redemption wrought by Jesus Christ was a real redemption, was sealed at Nicæa. Athanasius' "theological greatness lies in his firm grasp of soteriological principles, in his resolute subordination of everything else, even the formula ὁμοούσιος, to the central fact of redemption, and to what that fact implied as to the Person of Christ."[1]

The work of Athanasius as regards the person of Christ implied still further activity in the line of theological construction. The clearer definition of the nature and functions of the Spirit—the Rule of Faith had from early times enjoined the confession of the Spirit along with that of the Father and the Son,—and the fuller articulation of previous results in the doctrine of the Trinity, crowned the

[1] *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, iv., chap. iv. 1. Quoted by Ten. Broecke, *A Constructive Basis for Theology*, p. 109.

effort of Christian thought to assert itself and commend itself to the mind of the age. The term "Spirit" had, as is understandable, yielded itself to vague and various uses, and Origen's treatment of the matter had been something of an afterthought. The Spirit was thought of as the Spirit of God or of Christ ; it was now an impersonal influence, and, again, a messenger of God. But, as Harnack notes, in Irenæus and Tertullian we have efforts to give the Spirit an immanent or organic relation to the Father and the Son. The latter was the first to call the Spirit, God. The influence of Athanasius is here again decisive, and in the work of the Cappadocians, who engaged in theological reflexion with the speculative zeal of Origen and the conserving instinct of Athanasius, the doctrine of the Spirit is completed within the larger scheme of Trinitarian construction. According to Harnack, it was the Cappadocians and Apollinaris who created the doctrine of the Trinity, and, as scientific theologians, fixed the technical terms of the doctrine. There is one divine substance (ousia), and three distinct subjects or persons (hypostases). "The substance is to be thought of neither as a mere generic conception, nor, on the other hand, as a fourth alongside of the three subjects, but as a reality, *i.e.*, the unity must coincide with the real substance. The subjects, again, are not to be represented as mere attributes, nor, on the other hand, as separate persons, but as independent, though, apart from their mutual relationship, unthinkable, partakers of the divine substance. Their likeness of nature, which is involved in their community of substance, finds expression in the identity

of their attributes and activities; their difference in the characteristic note of their manner of existence as signified by the ideas unbegotten, begotten, proceeding from. . . . The Godhead is consequently in itself, and apart from all relation to the world, an inexhaustible living existence and no rigid and barren unity, 'as the Jews teach.' Yet neither is it a divided multiplicity, 'as the heathen think,' but, on the contrary, Unity in Trinity and Trinity in Unity."[1] The doctrine of the Trinity has often been submitted to criticism, but perhaps the fact that the Church made it a mystery to be received in faith, and that, in the language of Thomas Aquinas, it was *supra rationem*, and therefore beyond the sphere of proof, is an indication that from the first the religious significance of the doctrine was felt to outweigh the theoretical. Apart from the fine balancing of abstract terms, it is as the protest against a "rigid and barren unity" on the one hand, and a "multiplicity" on the other, that it is of real importance. Edward Caird[2] has reminded us that "Pantheism is the final outcome of Polytheism, the fatal gulf that must ultimately swallow up all merely objective religions"; and, again, that "Polytheism can easily find room for a new god in its Pantheon, and Pantheism can as easily remerge an individuality in its all-embracing, all-absorbing substance."[3] In the doctrine of the Trinity we have what might be called the instinctive reaction of an historical, redemptive religion against Deism and Pantheism. It is true, as Harnack says, that the

[1] Harnack, *History of Dogma*, iv. p. 120.
[2] *Evolution of Religion*, vol. i. p. 258.
[3] *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 17.

doctrine is a "most peculiar blend" of Christian thought and ancient philosophy. Such a blend was inevitable. Yet the doctrine was an effort to conserve certain great interests in the conception of God—the Divine transcendence, the reality of God's revelation on the plane of history, and, no less, the reality of His action in the life of the individual. The three "moments" of Absoluteness, Personality, and Love are expressed in the doctrine. That God is the living God, that He was present in Christ in the love that blessed and redeemed the world, and that He imparts Himself to men by the Spirit—these are the simple and sublime convictions that the doctrine enshrines. We see Christian thought freeing itself from the coils of the emanation idea, and laying firm hold of the idea of revelation or self-manifestation. We have an impressive assertion of the personality of God over against doctrines of the divine that made any sort of predication meaningless. The doctrine of the Trinity was recognised as a mystery. But it must never be forgotten that the mystery was not that of being or essence or substance or existence, but the mystery of Personality—not the mystery of the formless and the void, but of life itself. Theology and religion may well be content to stand before that, as before the unfathomable fact.

This was Augustine's deepest feeling. Augustine came to Christianity along the Pauline way, a man seeking peace and God. He had gone round the schools—of the eclectics, the dualists, and the Neo-Platonists—but it was as a penitent rather than as a seeker for light and knowledge that he came into

the school of Christ. It has been said of Tertullian that he combined the juristic with the passionate element in religion—he was a lawyer capable of enthusiasm. It can be said of Augustine that he combined philosophy with the profoundest piety. In speaking of Augustine, Harnack puts the language of appreciation to the test. From the beginning of the fifth century to the Reformation is to be regarded as one period, dominated by Augustine. In the experience and activity of that world-historical man lay the germs of Catholicism and the Reformation, of Positivism and Mysticism, of Asceticism and the Renaissance joy in life. "Where is there a man to be compared with him?" Yet at the heart of this man lay the hunger for God. And to God he took the inward way, *i.e.*, the ethical way. To the Neo-Platonic vision of God he added the vision of the soul; he actually saw the inner life. Augustine's psychology is really a survey of the inward way to God, an effort to realise what it means to have a living personal God. In the region of inward experience Augustine found the secret of being and of beauty, the soul's hunger for satisfaction and the presence of that goodness of God which, as omnipotent love, delivers the will from bondage and illusion and bestows peace. Apart from God man's freedom is only formal. He chooses and discriminates, but it is at the bidding of inclinations that minister to self. Only as God gives a man the overmastering love of the good, and so transforms the very content of the will, does he possess real freedom. *Mihi adhærere deo bonum est.* That was Augustine's fundamental conviction. As he moved among the realities of the inner life, all things out-

ward became as a vain show ; only the things unseen were eternal. " I desire to know God and the soul. Nothing more. Nothing at all." Augustine had followed the ascending path of Neo-Platonic speculation and found rest in the idea of changeless eternal being. From that height he had discerned the nothingness of all things apart from God, yet the relative existence of all things as dependent on God. But, as he said, " It is one thing to see the land of peace from the wooded top of a mountain, and another thing to enter upon the path that leads to it." The path that led to peace was the path that took Augustine into his own soul. There, amid the aspirations and impotencies that alternately exalted and tortured him, he found God. What, from the height of Neo-Platonic vision, had been the ontological defect of a world apart from God, became, in the depth of his own soul, the tragedy of a will that could only complete its destiny through God's love and grace. As with all great religious characters, so with Augustine—the real tragedy of the universe is ethical, the real work of God, redemption.

The theology of a man like Augustine is of secondary importance compared with his religion, and the inconsistencies that cling to his system have little more than academic interest. Augustine's central conviction was that he possessed God, which meant for him that God is a self-revealing God. Hence in his speculations on the Trinity the emphasis is on the fact that in each manifestation of God we have the whole Godhead. As Harnack puts it, in Augustine's doctrine the last traces of subordination disappear and there is an advance

towards Modalism. The "economical" Trinity of earlier thinkers became with Augustine the immanent; the unity is so insisted upon that the distinction of persons becomes rather the distinction of the functions of an underlying Reality. In the earlier doctrine the Father had been conceived of as the First Person (ἀρχή), and to be of the same nature with Him constituted the Godhead of the Son and the Spirit. Augustine declared that God is eternally One yet Three.[1] Undoubtedly it was Augustine's aim to deliver himself from the Neo-Platonic idea of an Absolute lying beyond the reach of thought, and out of all relations, yet there is ground for the criticism that the unity which for Augustine manifested itself in the three persons constitutes a background or inner nature of deity which is beyond distinctions. Augustine searched for analogies to relieve the obscurity of this argument. Thus in man's life he found memory, intelligence, and will, each capable of expressing the activity of the mind, while in their union constituting the whole mind. The analogy, as Augustine admitted, was imperfect, and could not but be. Yet it is significant as showing Augustine's determination to interpret God by means of the highest categories available. Here we have Augustine's most characteristic reaction against Neo-Platonism. Even Gregory of Nyssa had tended to lose the fact of personality in the depths of absolute being—only the strong Christian yearning for communion held the tendency in check. In an infinitude that passed all limits and rose above all comprehension there was needed the clue of Christian conviction to guide

[1] *Cf.* Kaftan's *Dogmatik*, 203 ff.

the soul through the labyrinth. Augustine found the clue in personality, and, as he sought for the essence of the soul in volition rather than in knowledge, the clue held. Life for Augustine was fundamentally striving—a striving that found its highest expression in the will. Thus Augustine found the real in personality. In his doctrine of God, God is the absolute personality, the ideal of holiness, justice, and goodness. The Neo-Platonic idea of God receives content; it is filled with the intensest life, a life which indeed is not to be conceived strictly after the fashion of man's—Augustine could fulminate against Anthropomorphism,—yet to which man's life points as to its ideal. Augustine sought God that his soul might live, not that it might be lost in mystic depths. "No one has done more than Augustine to confer a distinctive character upon Christian Mysticism" (Eucken). It is the rich content of Augustine's doctrine of God that saves his doctrine of predestination from harshness, even as it saved Paul's. Augustine exalts God and debases man. But if man is debased it is in presence of an ideal of perfection of surpassing splendour; it is not as a tool in the hand of fate. Hence man's humiliation is also his glory. If he is determined, the determining force is goodness. Thus "necessity is freedom," since necessity is love and grace. It is possible always to present the idea of predestination in such a way as to threaten the moral interests, for the idea is a dangerous one to handle. It cannot be said that Augustine escaped this danger as he followed out, with the passionate persistence which was his wont, certain lines of thought. In conceiving the moral life as a miracle of grace there was

lacking at times the Pauline thought that man works out his own salvation even as God works in him. The defect is part of Augustine's tendency to depreciate the more objective expressions of life in favour of the inward and spiritual. Harnack notes this in his remark that Augustine brought to an end the Hellenic view of things—that frank joy in outward things and in secular activities, for which a complete religious ideal must find a place. Such a harmony of outward and inward constitutes, as Harnack remarks, the true evangelical ideal. In Augustine's vision of the world as a work of art something of the joy remains. Yet the exclusive religious interest predominates. One might say that in Augustine we have, certainly not art for art's sake, nor yet even art for life's sake, but rather art for God's sake. We must avoid "idle and passing curiosity" as to "the beauty of the canopy of heaven, the order of the stars, and the splendour of the light." In all this, no doubt, we have the protest of a strong, intense nature against a decadent age, an age of "idolatry of mere literary form combined with poverty of ideas, the enthusiastic worship of great models without a breath of the spirit which gave them enduring charm."[1] A decadent age exacts a penalty even from the strongest, and Augustine did not escape. Yet it is to be remembered that he would almost have tolerated a temple reared in honour of Plato. His own abounding wealth of faculty made him an artist, even while his impulse was to depreciate art in the interests of piety. It can hardly be doubted that there was something morbid in Augustine's recoil

[1] *Cf.* Schubert, *Outlines of Church History*, p. 156.

from sense. Looked at more strictly from the philosophical point of view, this recoil, in the treatment of God and His relation to the world, seems to issue in a denial of the reality of the world. "Acosmism" is the term that Harnack uses to describe this aspect of Augustine's thought. The world is illusion—mere appearance. One can discern the religious motive that controls this argument. Augustine will suffer no rival to contest the supremacy with God, and in the passion of his advocacy would reduce the very works of God to nothingness. Hence, notwithstanding the doctrines of creation and predestination, in which the world is made dependent on God's will and declared to be under His absolute control, Augustine, in the very intensity of his desire to exalt God, seemed to lean at times towards the doctrine that whatever is not God in His totality, so to speak, is lacking in real being. The modern doctrine of "degrees of reality" is helpful here in enabling us to see how the difficulty may be lightened. If, as Augustine sometimes held, the world is infected by a negative element over against God, the Supreme Positive, and if this element of negation inheres in what is determinate, then it is difficult to escape the Neo-Platonic idea that the perfect is the indeterminate, a conclusion that was really antagonistic to Augustine's most characteristic affirmation concerning God. It is when Augustine is dealing in his intense way with the concept of personality that we are delivered from the region of the indeterminate *plus* emanations that are at once more real and yet less real than their source, and are brought face to face with a God who is self-determining and whose works are revelations.

Guarding the Deposit

The moment we pass from cosmological to religious and ethical categories, to goodness and holiness, we have another side of Augustine, an inconsistency, if one may use the word, that enables us to understand Schubert's remark that Augustine "provided work for the intellects of succeeding generations." The note of Augustine's life was the "delight in and love of that supreme and unchangeable good which is God."

It is a curious fact that the more immediate result of the activity of Augustine—the activity of a man who was above all else a man of the inner life, for whom religion was not doctrine but a passionately realised communion with God—was to strengthen the authority of the Church. In certain aspects of his thought Augustine seems to make for the extremest individualism in religion. But the exigencies of controversy and the general historical situation, which summoned the Church to undertake the leadership of the world, made Augustine a great churchman. Something deeper, also, operated. For Augustine, the Church was but a symbol of a divine authority to which submission was made in the inner shrine of man's reason and conscience and affections. But for minds that dwelt habitually on a lower level, this exalted conception could only express itself in an ecclesiasticism of the more formal and legal sort. Thus the problem which Augustine bequeathed to the Middle Ages was that of the relation of authority and reason. Minds, quickened and warmed by his speculations and devotions, could not forgo the interest either in the more philosophical aspects of religion or in its deeper emotional experiences. On the other hand, the Church, which

Augustine had done so much to confirm, demanded an implicit faith in its dogmas and an unwavering obedience to its enactments. Thus even at the beginning of the fifth century a situation existed which is not without analogy to the situation produced last century by the Hegelian movement. The dogmas of the Trinity and the Incarnation were accepted as constituting the substance of Christianity. But speculation was freely at work with the object of showing that assent to the dogmas was not incompatible with a deeper and more "rational" interpretation. Schopenhauer's remark that religion is the "metaphysics of the vulgar" would not have been out of place. Even superstitions were displayed as the pictorial thinking of the simple, which the philosopher could rationalise. The truth was that in building up its doctrinal system the Church had made alliance with philosophy and could not even in the Middle Ages buy out its partner. The influence of Dionysius the Areopagite is significant in this connection. For Dionysius the Church system was but the wrapping of profound truth, which philosophy could explicate. The problem of thought was to harmonise the absolute transcendence of God with the idea of a divine causality that would explain the relation of the One to the Many. The solution of the problem Dionysius set forth in a system—the terminology of which was derived largely from Proclus—which involved the absorption of the Many by the One. The crown of existence was indeed held to be the union of the soul with God, but, since God was conceived of as above both essence and knowledge, a being to be defined properly only by negatives, the union never became communion.

In Dionysius we have a doctrine of "eternal recurrence," distinguished indeed from Nietzsche's by the affirmation that God is the centre of the movement, and by its avowedly Christian intention, yet very much on the same level so far as ministering to any genuine religious need is concerned. The descent of the divine through "hierarchies," celestial and terrestrial, each with its group of "triads," and the corresponding ascent of the soul by a path of illumination, the goal of which is the "darkness" in which God dwells, "the Divine Dark," constitute the great cycle which sums up the meaning of the universe. Dionysius claimed to be a disciple of Paul, but by a literary artifice that could deceive nobody. The Apostle of the Gentiles never had a stranger disciple. Yet the "inexpressibly" significant fact, as Harnack remarks, is that by the sixth century the work of the Areopagite was invested with apostolic authority. The system of Dionysius has been called a "Christianised Neo-Platonism." Curiously enough, the underlying Pantheism of the system tended to strengthen both the ecclesiasticism and sacramentarianism of the age. Every visible and sensuous thing was but a symbol of the all-present God.

It is Eucken's judgment that to the historian of theology the thousand years that followed Augustine "offer nothing new," and Hegel's estimate of the Middle Ages and of Scholasticism is well known. "The whole effect of the scholastic philosophy is a monotonous one. . . . Scholasticism is not a fixed doctrine like Platonism or Scepticism, but a very indefinite name which comprehends the philosophic endeavour of Christendom for the greater part of a

thousand years. The history is comprised within one Notion . . . it is the faith of the Church we catch sight of, and a formalism which is merely an eternal analysis and constant reiteration within itself. . . . The scholastic philosophy is thus really theology, and the theology is nothing but philosophy."[1] It has been said also that in the mediæval period philosophy ceases to be the pursuit of truth, and that "to philosophise means to explain the dogma."[2] But since the dogma was an effort to express the truth concerning the highest matters, the matters which had been the subject of philosophy in all ages, there is justification for the judgment that "the threefold cord of speculation which runs through the scholastic age is of far deeper import and more lasting interest than philosophical students have generally understood." The modern contempt for Scholasticism, it has been held, "has been an affectation inherited from the Renaissance."[3] Dr Lindsay makes a useful enough distinction between the mediæval period and the period of Scholasticism. Speaking generally, during the mediæval period the higher thinking of the Church was influenced by Neo-Platonism; the "blossoming time of Scholasticism," to use Kaftan's phrase, came at the beginning of the thirteenth century when Aristotle's influence became decisive. A century earlier Aristotle's *Organon* had become known—for centuries previous there was acquaintance only with his logic—and did much to modify the tendency to interpret Aristotle in the light of Platonism, and indeed to make

[1] *History of Philosophy*, vol. iv. pp. 38, 39.
[2] Weber, *History of Philosophy*, p. 202.
[3] Lindsay, *Studies in European Philosophy*, p. 117 ff.

Aristotelianism a direct reaction against the dominant doctrine. The conflict of the philosophies had a very direct bearing on the question as to the relation of Authority and Reason—Realism in its alliance with Platonism yielding itself more readily to the defence of authority than the more analytic and empiric philosophy of Nominalism. But even while Platonism still held the field, Scotus Erigena in the ninth century, by the very fact of his bold and subtle speculations, opened the campaign against authority. For to seek to demonstrate, as Erigena sought to do, that authority is inherently rational, is to dissolve one of the terms of the contrast and exalt reason as determinative. To work on the dogma with the freedom and fearlessness which Erigena displayed, even with the avowed object of displaying its essential rationality, is to cite the decrees of the Church at the bar of reason. Erigena repeats many of the thoughts of the Areopagite, though with freshness of presentation. Philosophy is but another aspect of religion; in Hegelian phrase, "to think is to worship." Philosophy confronts the two mysteries, God and the soul. Both are beyond the mind's comprehension. God is above truth and error, "beyond good and evil." Since all determination is negation, to apply even the most abstract term to God by way of definition is inadmissible. We cannot even predicate being of God, since being is opposed to non-being, and God is beyond all antagonisms. God and the world are one since the world is a mode of the divine existence, and therefore may be spoken of as continuously created. To say that God created the world out of nothing means that the world is a mode of the

ineffable essence in presence of which thought is impotent to affirm anything. The way to God is the way of knowledge, and, since it is the destiny of all things to return to God, predestination with Erigena meant in its religious reference the salvation of all men. It has been said of Erigena that "he went out like a meteor in a dark night." But his type of thinking points back to Neo-Platonism and even to Gnosticism, and forward to some aspects of Absolute Idealism. The significant thing is that in the ninth century we should have an interest so preponderatingly intellectual and expressed with such force. For Erigena the universe is, so to speak, steeped in reason. "What wonder," he says, "if the notion of things which the human mind possesses, concreated with itself, is found to be the true substance of the things themselves of which it is the notion."

The quickening of scientific interest at the middle of the eleventh century finds expression in Anselm, whose name is associated chiefly with the "new proof" of God's existence, the ontological. But as regards the problem of Authority and Reason, it was Anselm's position that true reason must arrive at the results given by authority, *i.e.*, authority is really reasonable. What from one point of view is a defence of authority is at the same time the vindication of reason. The famous phrase *credo ut intelligam* has been variously interpreted. It has been held to mean that faith is the presupposition of theoretical knowledge, and undoubtedly the religious interest was powerful in Anselm. "With Anselm exact thought on the mysteries of God and His relations to the world and to men is not pursued as an

intellectual satisfaction, nor regarded as an end in itself. It is the means toward the larger end of setting the spirit into right relations to its Source and Father. Metaphysician though he was, . . . his instincts were religious."[1] Yet while Anselm was neither rationalist nor sceptic, and while faith retained for him the nobler meaning that Paul gave it, he had a strong confidence in the power of thought to exhibit the reasonableness of the dogma. His aim was to find a rational basis for faith, not, perhaps, in order to make the truths of faith more acceptable to doubting minds, but rather to exhibit their implicit value for thought. *Fides quærens intellectum.* Earlier reflection had bequeathed to Anselm arguments for God's existence based on the *consensus omnium* and on cosmological and teleological considerations, and, in some of the Fathers, suggestions of the ontological argument were not wanting, though Anselm was the first to present it as a proof. As everybody knows, the ontological proof has been "destroyed" by Kant, and declared by Hegel to be "alone the true one." The Kants and Hegels will always either question or affirm the validity of the argument. Something will fall to be said on this matter in a subsequent chapter. Meantime it may be remarked that the argument, whether in its Anselmic or Cartesian form, amounts to this, that our idea of God involves His existence. The first impulse of the mind is to reject the argument, and in its syllogistic form it was attacked at once by Gaunilo the monk of Marmoutiers. But while as a proof it may not withstand the scrutiny of the logician, as a declaration of the validity of experience and of the objective reference of ideas of a

[1] Welch, *Anselm*, p. 65.

certain status and quality it is a great and serious contribution to theology. The same note of high seriousness characterised all Anselm's thinking on God and His relation to men. Thus, as regards the Incarnation, it is the thought of redemption that is decisive, and even at the heart of the doctrine of satisfaction lies a thought that can be traced through the Areopagite and Erigena. So great is the offence of sin that God must become man ; the divine righteousness and love must pay tribute to themselves. Here we have that thought of the cycle of love that was Dionysius' insight into the meaning of the universe. In Anselm we have the Neo-Platonic impatience of anything approaching Dualism. In an age of authority, by emphasising with noble earnestness the immanence of God, he did much to contribute to that inwardness in religion which reliance on the Church as an institution is apt to threaten.

The middle of the eleventh and the beginning of the thirteenth century were times of mental quickening. In the latter period the work of Aristotle became familiar, and in the hands of men like Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas the Aristotelian method is freely used, even while the higher authority of Platonism is acknowledged. This explains the famous distinction made by Thomas—which was not made by Anselm — between what can and what cannot be proved. Anselm would rationalise the whole of dogma by means of Neo-Platonic categories ; Thomas would regard that part of dogma as rational which can be explicated by the principles of Aristotle. For the rest—as, *e.g.*, the ontological proof—it is *supra rationem.* This significant distinction gave rise to the idea of a twofold

truth, leading, under the influence of Duns Scotus, to the further idea that religion as a more practical and devotional interest may be clearly distinguished from theological speculation; and, still further, to the idea that there is something meritorious in accepting the dogma which a scientific theology cannot rationalise. Kaftan finds in this frame of mind the downfall of Scholasticism. For it calls a halt to thought, and in Scholasticism, as Anselm had represented it, there was no limit set to the right of reason to explain the dogma. As regards the doctrine of God, we have in Thomas the distinction between what may be known of God by natural means and what must be communicated by divine illumination. In other words, we have the distinction between natural and revealed religion. By means of natural reason man may attain to the knowledge of God's existence and unity; on the other hand, the Trinity and Incarnation are mysteries to be communicated. Speaking generally, Thomas exalted the cosmological method of proof above the ontological. The only available way by which the mind may reach God is by arguing from effect to cause. Along that line it is possible to lead a proof of convincing quality. But truths hidden from reason must be received on authority. There is the significant observation in Thomas that even scientific procedure depends on assumptions that are not to be demonstrated, and, further, that as regards the truths above reason theology may at least show that efforts to disprove them are fated to failure. There are truths, such as the full and final truth about God Himself, in regard to which it is rational to refrain from proof. One seems to find here the suggestion, not of a bare

authority to which the mind must bow in submissive faith, but of a higher reason, the truths of which transcend mere logical procedure. In Thomas we have the intermingling and sometimes conflict of two philosophies—the Aristotelian and the Platonic. The one led him by a process of inference to God as Creator, the other impelled him to bow before the transcendence of God as in presence of the Ineffable. Obviously, the Thomist distinction was one which the Church could use to buttress its authority. Yet in the idea of God as the supreme reason, and in the conception of the crown of religious experience as the *visio dei*, Thomas shows us that the principle of authority must be ultimately a principle that attests itself to the mind and conscience and heart of man. Like Augustine, Thomas strengthened the Church as an authority. But also, like Augustine, though on a lower level of spiritual force and fervour, he emphasised that individual approach to God, and that ecstatic sense of union with God to which we apply the term "mystical." Religion will never forgo this exalted experience.

It has been held by a recent writer[1] that the difference between the two periods—the period from Augustine to the Renaissance, and that from the Renaissance to the present time—is "fundamentally nothing but the difference between two conceptions of man." And the contrast is thus explained: "The first period believed in the dogma of original sin, and the second did not." Hence "the ideology of the first period is religious; of the second, humanist." In the first period man is seen in the

[1] *New Age*, vol. xviii. p. 315.

light of certain absolute values, ethical and religious, and in the light of these is judged to be "essentially limited and imperfect." In the second period a sense of the reality of these absolute values being lacking, "you get a refusal to believe any longer in the radical imperfection of either Man or Nature. This develops logically into the belief that life is the source and measure of all values, and that man is fundamentally good." It is held, further, that the conviction of the Middle Ages, viz., that man must subordinate himself to certain absolute values, was "the centre of their whole civilisation," and that even "the character of their economic life" was affected by it. Thus a connection can be traced between "the ideology of Thomas Aquinas and the economic life of his time." The contrast, taken broadly, is a suggestive one. What the historian of theology knows as the break-up of dogma may be otherwise characterised as the change of attitude to absolute values. The breaking up of dogma was brought about by the very force that had built it up, *i.e.*, by reason. The transition from the earlier to the later period is not from a time when reason was depreciated to a time when it was exalted, but rather to a time when reason, building on a distinction which reason itself had made—the Thomist distinction between truths that may be known by reason and truths that are above reason,—tended to limit its interest and activity to the former. Thus one conception rules in the *Aufklärung* and in the earlier period—the idea, viz., that the chief good is to be found in knowledge. But in the *Aufklärung* the horizon is restricted; the absolute values have faded. When the Bible took the place of the

Church as the seat of authority for Protestants, it was under the conviction that revelation is the communication of knowledge which reason cannot attain by its own efforts. With regard to these truths, it was admitted by orthodoxy that reason might exercise a formal function—recalling the negative function of Aquinas—but its activity could not be constitutive. The *Aufklärung*, which was not a system or a philosophy, but an attitude of the mind, a temper, a spirit, accepted this finding, and set aside the speculative dogmas. The formal work of rationalist orthodoxy was certainly not inspiring to an age tired of theological controversy and sensitive to many new interests. It was really a scholastic structure that orthodox theology reared after the Reformation, and it was less imposing than the older achievement. Thus the spirit of the Illumination—scientific, positive, rationalist, with a growing confidence born of the insistence on the right of private judgment, and a growing tendency to submit institutions to the test of the individual mind —turned away from the more mysterious side of religion. In its more constructive aspect it was deistic. A benevolent Deity was served by amiable and sensible creatures, who cherished a belief in providence and in the importance of duty, and in immortality. On its destructive side, as in France, it was materialistic and atheistic. In regard, therefore, to the conception of God we have the meagre deistic doctrine, issuing on the more critical side in denial, and producing by way of reaction the romantic revival and the speculative movement in philosophy and theology, a movement which in turn was followed by what has been aptly called a second

Aufklärung,[1] the Naturalism of the nineteenth century. In all this ebb and flow of thought it may be said quite justly that, so far as the doctrine of God is concerned, nothing appears with which the student of history is not familiar. The distant God of Deism, who becomes more distant as He is more clearly defined by rationalistic method, either vanishes entirely or is restored by a speculative effort of pantheistic character, in which the fact of Personality is dissolved in an all-pervading spirit or reason. The intellectual and imaginative interests predominate. It is with the uplifting of the ethical interest that Theism gathers confidence to assert that a satisfying doctrine of immanence depends on the firmly held conception of the Divine personality.

At this stage the significance of Kant is realised. Kant denied to metaphysics the competence to affirm the realities on which religion rests—God, freedom, and immortality. These realities do not come within experience, as Kant interpreted the word, and therefore theoretical reason, which exists to explicate and organise experience, cannot deal with them. True, on the frontiers of experience, so to speak, reason points upwards to these realities. There are ideas or ideals of reason, beyond theoretical proof yet significant and awaiting confirmation. So Kant called in a new world of spiritual interest to redress the balance of the old. The practical reason is summoned to complete the task of the theoretical, and man, as a subject of the "Realm of Ends," may reach assurance regarding reality. Kant summons the whole nature of man to the task of finding God. As a mere knower, man does not get beyond the

[1] Hutchison Stirling, *The Categories*, p. 127.

phenomenal; to knowledge the noumenal, the thing in itself, presents itself only as phenomenon. This phenomenal is not indeed illusion, not "mere" appearance; it is the appearance of the real. But the Real, presenting itself under the forms of knowledge, eludes the grasp of the mind. God does not disclose Himself fully to intellectual activity, for that is only one aspect of man's life, but to man in the full range of his experience. For man is not only a being who submits the universe to intellectual scrutiny, but a being to whom its secret comes through the will and through moral activity. In all this man is not beyond the sphere of reason, but within its range in its practical, rational aspect. The postulates, therefore, are not mere conjectures, thrown out at a venture; they are the practically rational proofs of the realities with which man deals in the central domain of his life—the ethical. Kant is sometimes spoken of as the father of an Agnosticism which may or not be accompanied by religious faith and feeling, according to the temperament of the individual. The extreme negative view of Kant's work has been expressed for all time by Heine: "After Christianity had become in the century before him a pure Deism, Kant gave this Deism its settler, put God to the sword, and forced immortality to breathe its last." We take a more constructive view. It may be granted that Kant gave Deism its "settler." He dealt the death-blow to Rationalism, though, as we shall see in a moment, there arose after him a great school of speculative philosophy in which reason was exalted. But it cannot be said that by his criticism of the proofs Kant "put God to the

sword," when we consider that criticism in the light of his insistence on the practical reason. Indeed it is Kaftan's judgment that the result of Kant's work is among the greatest of all time, and that he gave back to Christianity the practical faith which from the second century had been obscured by Logos speculation. In passing that noteworthy estimate Kaftan is well aware that Kant's presentation of Christianity cannot be said to do justice to the religion, but he holds that he gave the right standpoint for recovering Christianity, and that his most characteristic thought was in line with the principle of the Reformation. The rise of a school of speculative philosophy and theology which found its point of departure in Kant is to be explained by the fact that, while Kant assailed Rationalism and therefore seemed to detract from the importance of the individual mind on which the *Aufklärung* had laid such stress, by attaching the greatest significance to the *a priori* element in knowledge he exalted the mind. The mind, according to Kant, was no passive receptacle or blank tablet for the acceptance or record of material given from without. Through its categories it has a determining influence in building up the fabric of knowledge. This left the way open for Idealism—a way which Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel took, with results that were momentous for theology and for the doctrine of God.

The results presented by the speculative school were imposing and gave satisfaction and relief to many minds disturbed by the effects of the Kantian criticism. In Hegel's hands, especially, philosophy seemed to rehabilitate the great doctrines which an

earlier Rationalism had set aside. It seemed to many that the absolute values were being restored. Romanticism has been described by a writer, already referred to, as a "partial reaction" against the modern spirit which would reject these values. In literature it sets man in a more spacious world ; it touches his sense of awe by unveiling the deeper things of life and awakes emotions to which the "polite" literature of the *Aufklärung* failed to appeal. But the writer holds that the reaction is only "partial." Romanticism culminates in Rousseau rather than in the recovery of absolute values. Something of the same criticism might be passed on the speculative movement. Perhaps it also, at the best, was only a partial reaction. It presented the great doctrines, the Trinity and the Incarnation, to an admiring and receptive age as expressions of the very truth of reason. Christianity is the absolute religion, because at its heart lies the assertion of the unity of the divine and the human. It is still a matter of debate—though the heat of the contention is much less than it was a generation ago—how far Hegel succeeded in presenting an apologetic of Christianity. It cannot be doubted that it was his intention to present such an apologetic. Among the estimates submitted by Hegelians of the "right," "left," and "centre" it is by no means easy to decide. William James[1] made the suggestive remark that Hegel's "vision" may well be considered apart from his method. Eucken means the same thing when he distinguishes the philosopher's "intuition" from his "system." "The vision," wrote James, "was that of a world in which

[1] *Pluralistic Universe*, p. 87 f.

reason holds all things in solution, and accounts for all the irrationality that superficially appears by taking it up as a 'moment' into itself. This vision was so intense in Hegel, and the tone of authority with which he spoke from out of the midst of it was so weighty, that the impression he made has never been effaced." The vision, *i.e.*, is of a universe through and through rational, and since Hegel followed, as he could but follow, the process of reason as it unfolds itself in the mind of man, it might well be said by those anxious to interpret him constructively that his category of explanation was self-consciousness or personality. In any case James granted the impressiveness of the vision while condemning the method as one that deals with concepts in abstraction from fact and life. One feels the justice of this criticism in view of the Hegelian treatment of religion. It is often said that the Rationalism of the eighteenth century was indifferent to history; the same remark may, with a large measure of truth, be made of the speculation that followed Kant. It is often difficult to get a view of Christianity through the medium of the dialectic. Ward,[1] who holds that the Hegelians of the left are the true interpreters of the system, regards "the appeal to the Hegelian doctrine of the Trinity, as evidence of the theistic character of the philosophy, as peculiarly unfortunate." For "the doctrine is obviously and transparently pantheistic. In place of a triple personality there is no personality at all." And, certainly, when one reads that God the Father is "the eternal idea that is not yet posited in its reality, but is itself still the abstract idea," and

[1] *Realm of Ends*, p. 160.

further, that "God as simply the Father is not yet the true, . . . the abstract God, the Father, is the universal," one is tempted to say that we are either listening to the unfortunate expression of the obvious truth that God cannot be known until He has revealed Himself, or that we are being transported into regions too abstract to have any interest for religion. The more specific theological outcome of the speculative movement, as in Biedermann, *e.g.*, seems to lend confirmation to Kaftan's view that the process by which it was believed that the deeper truth of Christianity was being emancipated by means of the dialectic was really a process of dissolution. The statements that in the Incarnation the world is God's son, and that, as regards the doctrine of the Trinity, the Finite is the second person of the Godhead, are in accord with the fundamental idea of the system that it is only in a "figurative" way that we can speak of the Absolute Spirit as personal. The use of the familiar terms of theology does not disguise the fact that Christianity has changed its character.

Occasion has been found on previous pages to refer to certain aspects of thought that are related both by way of sympathy and antagonism to the speculative movement. Generations devoted to science, to historical investigation, to the study of the volitional side of man's life, found themselves far removed from the aims and methods of the followers of Hegel. On the most various grounds the conclusions of the school were modified or set aside. As regards the doctrine of God the conflict waged around the question of personality. The recovery of the ethical note by Ritschl and his

followers—in loyalty to the constructive side of Kant—and the determination to think of God in terms of Jesus Christ, were of the greatest moment in defining afresh a truly theistic doctrine of God. Ritschlianism as a reaction tended, of course, to heighten the contrast between its aims and methods and those of the speculative school. But the charge that it was very much a system of Agnosticism, combined with certain moral and even sentimental preferences, lost its cogency in view of the clearer recognition of the fact that there can be no final divorce between truth and value. The task of theology is to show that the value of a God of righteousness and love for the religious life is one with the truth which the ideals of reason demand.

CHAPTER VI

THE REASONABLENESS OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GOD

CHRISTIAN theology feels the obligation to justify its doctrine of God to the reason of man. In its efforts to discharge this duty it has met with much criticism, both as to the methods it has adopted and the results it has achieved. It has been charged with presumption in claiming for religious belief the high sanction of reason, and, again, censured for submitting the truth of religion to the test of mere logic. But surely, whatever success it has attained on the apologetic side of its work, the rightness of its aim as regards its central doctrine cannot be doubted. Theology can have no higher task than to defend to the utmost of its power the conviction that the experience of Jesus Christ, His experience of the Father, was a response to reality, and not the most glorious and pathetic of illusions. In contending for this it is maintaining what Troeltsch has called "the validity of Christianity." There is a point at which theology must feel the call to pass from the history of religion and its psychology, from the study of religion as a force in human affairs and an element in individual experience, to what is known as the metaphysics of religion. In the well-known phrases,

the discussion of the "nature" of religion is followed by an inquiry into its "truth."

The attitude of modern apologetics to this question is of great interest. From one point of view it may be said to be distinguished by a greater modesty than was formerly apparent, perhaps by a greater humility. Yet it would not be correct to say that this humility means any real lowering of the claims of apologetics. It is rather due to a certain calmness of mind, induced by a deepened sense of the significance of religious experience in its wealth and range, and by a wholesome appreciation of the limitations of science so far as the ultimate problems are concerned, and of the fact that philosophy, instead of being the final arbiter on the claims of religion, must share with religion, in the last resort, an attitude of faith. Apologetics no longer appeals to an authority which can guarantee the truth of doctrine nor depends on a coercive demonstration of the logical order. If it seeks rather, in Kaftan's[1] phrase, to preserve "the character of faith peculiar to Christian knowledge," it is only showing its sympathy with "the general mental life of the time." "Reality can never be ultimately merely what it is for our thought." Bergson has made us familiar with this consideration to-day as part of the "anti-intellectualist" tendency of the age. The bond that binds man to reality is not merely intellectual but vital, and, consequently, "intuition" is put on a higher level than discursive knowledge. With Kant the very fact of knowledge seemed to imply that a veil obscured the reality; with Bergson true knowledge involves a living relation with the object.

[1] *Cf.* Kaftan, *The Truth of the Christian Religion*, ii., chap. iv.

Bergson's idea of intuition is of great value for theology. Life is greater than thought, and included in this greater are the emotional and ethical elements that enrich religious experience. In declining, therefore, the task of presenting a proof for the Christian doctrine of God that is logically coercive, theology may be said to be showing itself sensitive, yet in no craven fashion, to the spirit of the age. If we have grown suspicious of logic—in the sense in which, *e.g.*, Carlyle was wont to use the word—it is not because we have lost faith in the trustworthiness of the universe, but rather because the sense of its greatness and wonder has deepened. "It is not too much to say," writes Dr Schiller,[1] "that a large proportion of the best human thought has been profoundly alienated from religion thanks to the malign influence of Formal Logic. . . . Rationalism has beguiled the opponents of Religion to criticise religions as purely rational systems of belief to be judged by rigid canons of formal consistency, and to be condemned for the moral deficiencies and atrocities to which the attempts to carry out religiously the requirements of Formal Logic committed them. They argued that because the systems of theology which rationalistic theologians had compiled were not consistent, therefore all religions were false, and that there was neither truth nor use in them ; they did not perceive that even the poorest religion is more than an exercise in Formal Logic, and that no religion can be consistent so long as they all try to adapt themselves to formal ideals which ignore and condemn their essential meaning." If theology, then, does not seek to exhibit the object of Christian faith as

[1] *Formal Logic*, p. 401.

objective theoretical knowledge, it is because it realises more keenly the significance and rights of faith. It recognises that "human knowledge taken as a whole cannot be completed without losing its objective character the higher it rises; even the scientific proof for a final theory of the world can be formulated only if it appeals not to the intellect but to the whole man." For it is "the absolute validity of a practical idea" we have to do with, and we may take Kaftan to mean by a practical idea an idea that has to do with life as it launches itself on the great venture of living. Now "no one can even understand such an idea unless experiences in the field of internal freedom have helped him to do so." The method of proof, then, must "answer to the Christian faith." This is equivalent to saying that any attempt to justify the Christian belief in God must do justice to its subject. It cannot be said that Rationalism of the older type realised in any adequate degree the significance of the experience for which it sought logical support. Its aim was "to simplify, to level, to make intelligible and self-consistent. . . . The question was, Is religion a source of happiness?"[1] The whole romantic movement was the protest against the levelling tendency of Rationalism.

An interesting example of modern apologetics, in the width of its outlook, the freedom of its method, and the essentially constructive character of its results, is to be found in the work of Troeltsch.[2]

[1] Wallace, *The Logic of Hegel, Prolegomena*, p. 175.

[2] See Troeltsch's article on "Dogmatics of 'Religions Geschichtliche Schule'" in *Amer. Journ. of Theology*, vol. xvii., No. 1, pp. 1–21. "The German word *religionsgeschichtlich* has no exact English equivalent. . . . The nearest approach to the German term is the

And here the point of greatest interest is, of course, that at which the question as to the truth or validity of Christianity emerges. The sphere of theological activity, as Troeltsch sees it, may be represented by three concentric circles. In the outer circle we have the historical investigation of Christianity and its development. The method here is strictly "religious-historical." Christianity is studied in its contact with other religions as one religion among many. The investigation is not affected by any philosophy of religion or dogmatic system; it is, if such a thing is possible, entirely without presuppositions, or rather its only presupposition is that there is no such thing as a supernatural revelation. The object is to exhibit Christianity as it appears against the background of late Judaism, and to follow the stages by which it became "the world-conquering Christ religion and sacramental Church." In all this work we do not recognise a school so much as a method, the scientific method in history. In the intermediate circle we come upon the task of the philosophy of religion or systematic theology, in its wider reference, rather than on that of the historian and psychologist. Here the problem is to establish the "validity of Christianity." The problem is not yet one in dogmatics, since no use is made of such categories as inspiration and revelation. Rather, the object is to discover the "normative" in Christianity in the light of "an adequate conception of the idea of religion and its development." The work of the Cairds and of writers like Eucken and

current expression 'comparative religion.'" The position outlined in this famous article is set forth fully in *Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte*. *Cf.* Foster's *The Finality of the Christian Religion*, Chicago, 1909.

Otto is cited as characteristic of activity in this field. The results achieved in this field may be used in support of varying dogmatic conclusions, and there may be cases where the difficulty of validating Christianity is so keenly felt that the attempt at a dogmatic is abandoned. This, as Troeltsch points out, means Scepticism and the dissolution of religion, for if we must simply face a vast complex of facts without any vision of their order or progress, their significance vanishes. In the inner circle we come upon the proper sphere of dogmatics with its threefold task. Here we face the "special ultimate theological problem," which is defined as "the exposition of a normative Christian religious system." And in regard to this we may harbour the conviction that in view of what has been achieved during the last generation in the outer and intermediate circles of inquiry, in view of the new light cast on the Old and New Testament by historical criticism, we are at the beginning of a new constructive dogmatic effort. Criticism has given us a new world with such an "appalling" number of problems that we must look back at the labours even of such giants as Schleiermacher and Hegel as "antiquated exercises of the imagination." Dogmatics can never again seek its material elsewhere than in history.

The threefold task of dogmatics, then, is to establish the supremacy of Christianity, to define its essence, and to expound its content. The first is the more specific apologetic task. Perhaps some may discern in Troeltsch a lowering of the apologetic ideal. For he does not speak of Christianity as the absolute religion—the associations of the phrase, it may be, are too compromising—but rather of

the "fundamental and universal supremacy of Christianity for our culture and civilisation." How do we become assured of this? The answer is highly significant. In the course of our comparative study a "standard emerges" through "the exercise of our religious and ethical appreciation." We reach a decision through a "sympathetic understanding of the facts." This standard cannot be objectively demonstrated by scientific means. But it is none the less determinative. Troeltsch will not permit us to say that there is anything arbitrary or subjective about the standard, or that the decision reached in favour of Christianity is a value judgment or postulate without ontological significance. The problem of the standard indeed, he admits, "contains in itself the difficulties that are most intensive to the philosophy of religion." But, as regards the problem of the standard, Troeltsch stands in the Platonic succession. Pragmatism has no keener, albeit no fairer or more appreciative, critic. We cannot do justice to religion by putting usefulness in place of truth, nor can we have a doctrine of values without the idea of "an element unqualifiedly valid." It is by virtue of the "religious *a priori*" element in consciousness that the standard emerges which enables us to test the religions and decide for Christianity. Häring[1] has commented on the vagueness of the famous phrase, "religious *a priori*," and said with truth that if it is simply to be regarded as "the equivalent to the theoretical in Kant's sense it is 'all over with the distinctive character of religion.'" But it is quite evidently to be taken as more than the theoretical in Kant's

[1] *The Christian Faith*, pp. 131, 133.

sense—especially if we regard the Kantian theoretical as carrying us only to the frontiers of the phenomenal from whence we project postulates into the regions beyond. Häring does more justice to the phrase when he speaks of it as witnessing to the efforts of "the deeper spirits" in the religious-historical movement, and displaying an "enormous increase of courage in thought and of trust in the competence of thought to decide the highest questions." This latter estimate would seem to do more justice to Troeltsch's position. For when, on the basis of a "sympathetic understanding" of the facts and a "religious and ethical appreciation" of the religions, Troeltsch issues his "decision," it is in favour of Christianity as "a prophetic Christian Theism" over against "the Quietism and Pessimism of Oriental religions." And this, it is to be noted, is a decision to which both theoretical and practical elements contribute. It can be shown how it is related to "the religious idea" itself, *i.e.*, to the "religious *a priori*"—which, be it remembered, witnesses to an element in consciousness that is "unqualifiedly valid"—and also that it is compatible with "the other demands of life," *i.e.*, with the ethical and emotional demands. The conclusion is that we have "absolutely no occasion to abandon the Christian fundamentals." Can it be said that in speaking of the fundamental supremacy of Christianity for our culture instead of the "absoluteness" of Christianity, in the older, speculative sense of the term, we have a lowering of the apologetic claim? The question is of the greatest importance at the present stage of inquiry, and has implications that carry us beyond theology.

The reaction against the use of the term "absolute," or, at any rate, the new definition of the term, is part of the widespread tendency to-day to interpret the universe dynamically rather than in static terms. Bergson's work is here of the greatest significance. In the thought that we must seek reality in life itself, and discern the secret of life in change which is creative evolution ; that we must no longer seek, as with Kant, the ideal of science in mathematics with its abstract categories, but recognise that science is a real interpretation of reality and affords a genuine ground for metaphysical knowledge, which is immediate, "intuitive" knowledge of the livingness of the universe, we get light on the attitude of Troeltsch and his school. In Bergson's[1] plea that the older metaphysics stated reality in terms of space, eliminating the element of time and change, and therefore failing to give us real knowledge, whereas we must state the relation between knowledge and its objects in terms of time, we get another expression of the same spirit. The absoluteness of Christianity is to be sought in its dynamic quality, its power to exhibit itself as part of the developing life of the world. Without entering into the hard and crucial question of how far reality may be conceived of as life and creative movement apart from some principle of stability that would seem to be necessary in order to reveal the very fact of change, one feels the impressiveness of this view of Christianity and the need to emphasise it. To say that Christianity is not something once for all given, but ever given afresh to inspire and indeed constitute the higher life of mankind, is to

[1] See A. D. Lindsay's *The Philosophy of Bergson*, ch. i.

be in accord with its own claims. As E. F. Scott[1] has put it: "The Fourth Evangelist refuses to identify Christianity with any given doctrine. He grounds its claim to be the absolute religion precisely on this, that it is capable of an infinite development. The original message was the beginning of an endless revelation, which is mediated by the living Spirit." And again: "The finality of our religion consists in nothing else than in its endless capacity of growth and self-renewal. It is the absolute because it is the living religion. 'The water that I shall give you will be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life.'"[2]

Christianity, then, with Troeltsch is a "prophetic Christian Theism," and the second task of dogmatics is to unfold the meaning of this statement. The first task, the more specifically apologetic, has to do with the whole living complex of Christianity, with its relation by way of action and reaction to its environment from the Platonism and Stoicism with which it had to come to terms in the early days to the national, political, and social ideals, the science and humanitarian ethics, which in later times have at once conditioned and been conditioned by the religion. The second task is to inquire as to the meaning of this force that entered history at a given time. Troeltsch describes it as "an immanent impelling power or fundamental ideal," which may be regarded as the essence of Christianity. Schleiermacher found the essence of Christianity in "the redemptive increase of ethico-religious vigour radiating from Jesus"; Hegel in the idea of the Trinity and the

[1] *The Apologetic of the New Testament*, pp. 214, 220.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 214.

Incarnation ; Harnack would find it in "brotherly love founded upon trust in God as the Father of Jesus Christ." Thus we have three definitions of the essence—Christianity as "a humanising of the pietistic doctrine of redemption," as "a speculative interpretation of the central ecclesiastical dogmas," and as an interpretation "in terms of Kantian ethics" of the "preaching of Jesus concerning the kingdom." Troeltsch does not accept any of these interpretations. For him the essence of Christianity is "the productive power of Christianity to create new interpretations." Thus the essence of Christianity differs in different ages, or, as it may be put, its essence in any one age is but an aspect of its total essence. We arrive at a conception of the nature of Christianity—and this is a point of great importance for apologetic—by way of investigation of its history, but also by way of "subjective and creative interpretation and construction." That is, Christianity is not a fact of history to be dispassionately investigated ; it touches something in the investigator, it creates an attitude of the spirit of the investigator to itself so that he not only observes but evaluates it. Such evaluations must always differ, for each man brings his own life and mind to the task, yet the influence of the subject under investigation and the spiritual conditions of any one age impart a common quality to the evaluations. Troeltsch's own evaluation or appreciation of Christianity is thus stated : "Christian religious faith is faith in the regeneration of man who is alienated from God, a regeneration effected through the knowledge of God in Christ." Further, "the consequence of this regeneration is union with God

and social fellowship so as to constitute the kingdom of God." We are here in a thought world very far away from that in which the older dogma was built, and even from that in which the speculative school did its work a century ago. Here is an appreciation of Christianity by a representative man, made under all the stress and pressure of the present generation. It is of high interest to the student of apologetics. If representatives of a more "positive" attitude be inclined to condemn it as meagre, it might be said by way of defence that it contains implicitly a doctrine of God and of Christ and of the Spirit, of sin and salvation, which may be held not unjustly to be in fundamental harmony with what lies at the heart, at least, of the great historic affirmations on these topics.

The third task of dogmatics, according to Troeltsch, brings us to the "real and specific business" of that discipline. It is to expound the content of Christianity as above evaluated and defined, *i.e.*, to formulate the doctrines of God, man, and redemption that are bound up with the general conception. Troeltsch does not hesitate to affirm that under the influence of the religious-historical method there is a distinct modification of Christology. This appears in the statement of the doctrine of God—"the God of Jesus is the object of faith, and Jesus Himself is transformed into the historical mediator and revealer." Troeltsch describes this result as the "inevitable correlative" of historical criticism. The consequences of this are worthy of careful note. Remembering that essential Christianity is the Christianity that reveals itself in fresh and creative ways amid the conditions of modern life, its doc-

trine of God may be regarded as independent of past history and as bound up with present experience, and, above all, with the individual's experience of redemption. The Christian doctrine of God may be set forth in present-day "metaphysical-religious" statements as a theistic doctrine. But, on the other hand, it is a "prophetic Christian Theism," and that at once reminds us that Christian experience is not without reference to the past. Indeed, it receives "its power, its vitality, and its definiteness from events of history leading up to God; and particularly from the prophets and Jesus." Theology has therefore to give an interpretation of the history as well as seek by means of the best thought of the present to construct its doctrine of God, and this interpretation will be "religious" in contrast to a destructive historical criticism. Thus it will seek to set forth the religious significance of prophecy and, above all, of Jesus, as He "stands in the foreground" with His significance for the life of the individual and of the community. This consideration is well urged by E. F. Scott: "Christianity in its onward march does not break away from the historic tradition. . . . The significance of Jesus in His divine personality can never be exhausted. To each new time, to each individual believer, He has a different message, which is imparted by His spirit."

Prophetic Christian Theism, then, with its doctrine of "the God of Jesus as the object of faith," is to be expounded on the ground of history and experience in full view of scientific conclusions today in "the realm of cosmology, anthropology, and the like." But it does not present itself to Science

as a suppliant for its support. Its subject matter is one of the great forces that are shaping modern life, viz., religion, and, therefore, it proceeds "in an absolutely free and unembarrassed fashion." It can accept without fear scientific conclusions and maintain its religious interpretation of life. It is not strictly, indeed, a science, but rather of the nature of a confession of faith, yet a confession that may lift its head unashamed amid the forces and movements of the modern world. It is not a science, for it can never divest itself of the character expressed in these words of Troeltsch : "The decisive affirmation of the Christian conception of the world is due to a personal choice." And again : "The definition of the 'essence' of Christianity, valid for the present, is no less a matter of personal intuition." These are observations of the greatest significance for theology in its apologetic aspect. The element of personal choice and personal intuition in the Christian affirmation might seem to impart to it a character of arbitrariness. Rightly understood, it means that theology moves among the facts and forces of life—man's freedom of choice, to evaluate, appreciate—which give life its significance. The world of theology is, as Royce has expressed it, "the world of appreciation" rather than "the world of description." "It" (theology) "represents," in Troeltsch's striking words, "a productive and constructive movement of the forces of history itself." From this point of view theology is not a science in the stricter sense of the word. But that is no limitation. It is a tribute to the wealth of its subject matter and also to the range of its practical interests. Theology may claim through preaching to be a guide for living.

The chief difficulty in regard to Troeltsch's apologetic aim arises in connection with his conception of reality. In defending his presentation against the charge of Subjectivism he grants that for dogmatics we may substitute Schleiermacher's phrase, "the doctrine of faith." But it does not follow that theology in expounding with scientific care this doctrine of faith is simply arranging methodically certain affirmations concerning God and the universe which are without validity or objective reference. It is largely, as Troeltsch points out, a question of terminology, and the term dogmatic has the weight of usage in its favour. Yet Troeltsch holds that there "is no such thing as an unchangeably fixed truth." Such a truth would be unknowable to man, and, further, impossible, because of the "vital changing character of our world, where there is no completely finished programme, needing simply to be put into practice, but where instead there are increasingly new and vital attempts to construe the essential nature of a reality which is ever in process of evolution." Such words as these bring us to the very heart of the apologetic problem as it presents itself to-day. If they meant that reality is in the making, there would be no escape from the conclusion that there is an end of apologetics, and that the affirmations of faith are purely subjective, that, in Troeltsch's own phrase, "dogmatics is an irresponsible piece of Subjectivism." But it cannot be said that the words bear that meaning. Strictly speaking it cannot be said that reality is in the making, for it is that which makes all making possible. The evolution of reality can

only mean the revelation of reality, or the progressive apprehension of it. In this sense it may be granted that there is no unchangeable truth for man ; for such a truth would mean the full and final knowledge of reality. In view of Troeltsch's philosophical presuppositions, to which reference has been made in a previous chapter, there is ground for holding that this is what is involved in his position. Man's task is "to construe the essential nature of a reality which is ever in process of evolution." It is a reality, be it noted, with an "essential nature" which man has to construe or interpret. And this essential nature unfolds itself to man's interpretation in the process of evolution. Here apologetics is simply face to face again with the problem of transcendence and immanence stated in modern terms. The transcendent reality can only be immanent in a living and growing world, in a process of evolution, and it is through this process that its essential nature is progressively unveiled to man's interpretation. But this unveiling is experience. Man is not simply a spectator of the process ; his interpretation proceeds by the values he assigns to certain parts of his experience. It is quite in accord with this view of a reality revealing or realising itself in an unceasing process of evolution, that —since the reality is life and spirit and power—there should be certain stages or epochs of interpretation that stand out from others and become determinative for succeeding experience. Such epochs are found in prophecy and in that fullness of the time when the light shone in darkness. When, therefore, present-day apologetics, in the hands of a writer like Troeltsch, would use the term "absolute" in

a sense different from older usage, it may quite fairly be held that the new meaning put into the term may forward the aims of a constructive theology. The "dynamic" conception of reality would at any rate bring reality really into time, and the use of the category of evolution—which was supposed at one time to sound the death-knell of theology—is now seen to be but a means of explaining the fact of immanence. And further, since it must be admitted that we cannot hope to find within the time form the absolutely absolute, so to speak, is that not just the acknowledgment of the transcendent which a theistic doctrine must ever make? When Troeltsch speaks of dogmatics "working forward toward an absolute goal" he suggests the ideal which theology must ever possess as its unfailing inspiration. Theology must preserve this idealistic character; it is its strongest recommendation. For, as Troeltsch reminds us, it has to do with the "life values which emerge in the process of evolution." It is not for science to determine these values. They can only be grasped by "an intuition which feels, appreciates, and interprets them." To the objection, then, that dogmatics is not science, Troeltsch would reply that it is not science, because it is something more and greater: it is intuition. And here again we meet with an idea which is fundamental in Bergson's philosophy.

This sketch of a characteristic type of present-day apologetics helps us to realise the distance that has been traversed since theology on its apologetic side regarded it as its first task to marshal the "proofs" for the existence of God. These proofs have fallen

on evil times.[1] There is now hardly anyone so intellectually poor as do them reverence—though reference must not be omitted to the impressive work done by the late Dr Hutchison Stirling in the way of their vindication. The decline of interest in and reliance upon the proofs since Kant's day illustrates the two ways in which his influence has told. They have been depreciated in the interest of religion and also in the interest of negation. The tendency has been, on the one hand, to say that the case for religion is too great to be defended by such methods, and, on the other hand, that since the proofs have broken down there is no case for religion. The former tendency has undoubtedly been the more influential, and in the Ritschlian movement and its off-shoots has guided apologetics along lines of reflexion that do justice to religious experience. But we are never allowed to forget the thoroughness of Kant's onslaught on the proofs. They are the "so-called proofs" (*die sogenannten Beweise*) for the existence of God, the "proofs" which "played a prominent part in metaphysics before their discrediting at the hands of Kant."[2] "What must first be proved," says Häring, "is of no value." And he goes on: "For at bottom a conviction valid in the strict sense for every normal intelligence has never been regarded as the aim of a proof for the truth of Christianity, nor logical demonstration as a means thereto."[3] Yet

[1] *Cf.* James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 437. "The arguments for God's existence have stood for hundreds of years with the waves of unbelieving criticism breaking against them, never totally discrediting them in the ears of the faithful, but on the whole slowly and surely washing out the mortar from between their joints."

[2] A. E. Taylor, *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 400.

[3] *The Christian Faith*, p. 140.

Häring is mindful to insert a warning that in the last resort there can be no opposition between faith and knowledge, and that their irreconcilability must in no case be insisted on. "Twofold truth would be the death both of faith and knowledge." Nevertheless, he is emphatic in holding that theoretical considerations can only, so to speak, assist in regulating the traffic, or in clearing the way, for the larger vindication of religion. "In all sad sincerity, I think we must conclude," writes James, "that the attempt to demonstrate by purely intellectual processes the truth of the deliverances of direct religious experience is absolutely hopeless."[1] Yet James also grants that there are ways in which philosophy may help religion. It may do so by ceasing to be metaphysics and becoming the science of religion. It may at least help to "eliminate" the absurd from religious constructions, and seek to harmonise man's feeling of the divine with sound ways of thinking. Here once more we have the recognition that in the last resort there cannot be a twofold truth. On the whole, then, the depreciation of the proofs in modern thinking, or, at any rate, the tacit agreement to leave them in the background, must not be regarded as indicating a decline in the apologetic interest, but rather the tendency to adopt what has been called "the ethical approach to Theism." Yet even in this ethical approach the presence of the theoretical element is acknowledged. "It may well be asked," writes Mr G. F. Barbour,[2] "whether the resolution to treat religion solely on moral lines, and the refusal to allow any but ethical categories to enter

[1] *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 455.
[2] *The Ethical Approach to Theism*, p. 6.

into the statement of its truth, do not involve a confusion between different spheres of thought, and perhaps even a surrender of other interests which are also vital. . . . For (the intellect) also has its ideals—the ideal of universality—and it claims its full share in interpreting the idea of God since He is the highest Object of knowledge as well as of ethical endeavour." The aim is to take experience broadly, and, above all, to do justice to the characteristic claim of religious experience in our effort to interpret reality. It is just here, one feels, that something may be done, not to rehabilitate the proofs as strictly logical demonstrations, but to recognise elements of permanent value in the attitude of mind they represent. For, after all, the proofs are efforts to account for and interpret experience, and, taking this wider and deeper view of them, they have a serious and worthy aspect. Man will ever seek to explain so far as he can the impression which the world makes upon him, both in its vastness and grandeur and in its more delicate and intimate appeal. Something of a cosmological and teleological argument will emerge as man seeks to make intelligible to himself the wonderful setting of his life. His impressions will not always find utterance in the form of an argument; they will be expressed in the rapture of the poet and the vision of the artist. The poet looking up to the heavens, the work of God's hand, feels that the heavens declare the glory of God. No doubt when the profound impressions that the world makes upon men are carried into the schools their utterance tends to shrivel up into the syllogism, and we get our "proofs," vulnerable, as are all the syntheses

created by man's mind. Yet not all the instruments of logical analysis will destroy the rapture of the seer, or shake the deep assurances that are born of his vision. This is an aspect of the matter that the critic of the proofs does not always recognise. He may say, of course, quite justly, that it is not his business to consider this aspect, that the proofs, presenting themselves as "assent-compelling" propositions, must be taken on their own valuation. Yet Häring has well expressed this wider reference. "Such an attitude" (*i.e.*, of the critic), he writes, "to the theistic proofs does not deprive them of all value. . . . They will not fail to make an impression . . . if they claim to rank not as demonstrative proofs but as genuine indications of God, the force of which can hardly be overestimated when they are combined with certain needs and obligations of the inner life."[1] This conception of the proofs as "genuine indications of God" may be said to give them higher praise, and indeed to assign a nobler character to our universe, than logical cogency would bestow. Specially may this be felt in regard to the moral and ontological arguments. If we simply say that from the moral law we must infer a Lawgiver, or that from the idea of God we must conclude as to His existence, we present great convictions in a vulnerable form. But if we feel, following Kant, that man's conviction of a Highest Good and his quest of a moral ideal demand and necessitate God to give reality to the ideal; further, that man's quest of a chief good is only intelligible in a world of freedom, and that the splendour of the quest carries with it the implication of a career

[1] *The Christian Faith*, p. 152.

for man as an ethical being which transcends the visible and temporal, we may not be in the realm of proofs, but we are in a realm where, we are convinced, something deeper than the demand for logical completeness is finding satisfaction. So with the sense of the divine, the sense of God, which has haunted man's soul in all ages. It may be a small thing to say of this that it supplies material for an inference ; it is surely not a small thing to say of it that it has been the most solemn accompaniment of and element in human experience, and that man's greatest achievements have been wrought under its power.

Considerations such as these are enforced by the fact that the criticism which modern apologetics offers of the proofs usually takes the line that they do not go far enough, and fail to yield, even if their legitimacy be granted, a sufficiently rich doctrine of God. Thus the cosmological argument, which would lead us to a First Cause, does not carry with it any assurance as to the personality of that cause. It would carry us from the contingent to the necessary, from effect to cause, from the movement of the world to the unmoved Mover ; it would give rest to the mind from the toil of the endless regress. Yet it is admitted by apologetic writers that it does not carry us to the God of Theism, and still less, of course, to the Christian conception of God. The deeper bearings of the argument, however, have been strikingly set forth by Dr Hutchison Stirling. To deny us the cosmological support is, in his opinion, to deprive us of the " rationality that we have, to say so, almost in our very blood." " It is taking our stand on the facts " (*i.e.*, the facts of

contingency and of the precariousness of man's existence) "that we involuntarily conclude to the existence of an absolutely necessary being that is the reason at once of the existence and the support of all these things—which are so utterly unsupported and so powerless in themselves. And so it is that the cosmological argument has been specially put in connection with the religion of power. . . . In the Hebrew Scriptures, for example, what an attribute is power. . . . We have only to think of this to have it very vividly realised to us that the cosmological argument is founded on the depths of man's own soul. It is not an argument forced, scholastic, artificial; it is religion to the peoples. The whole image of Jehovah and the footstool of the universe is but the cosmological argument itself in its sublimest and most natural form. The contingent universe is but the footstool to the absolute necessity of God."[1] In the same way Dr Stirling took the teleological argument much more seriously than did its Kantian critics. The teleological argument, as is well known, has been all along the most popular of the theistic reasonings. It has ever seemed to man that the orderliness and opulence of the world pointed to an Author of nature of infinite wisdom and goodness. Kant attacked the argument with the observation, among others, that the order and adaptation of nature permit only an inference to finite wisdom and goodness. To assert the absolute harmoniousness and goodness of nature is more than the facts entitle us to do, and, therefore, an inference to perfect wisdom and goodness is unwarranted. It was Hume who called attention to the want of

[1] *Philosophy and Theology*, p. 308.

adaptation in nature and challenged men to consider what that fact involved. "All that the argument from design can possibly prove," says Kant, "is an architect of the world who is very much limited by the adaptability of the material with which he works." The objections to the Design Argument raise the whole question of the relation of a necessary ground of being to the contingent in a peculiarly acute form. This, it may be remembered, is the question which Troeltsch regards as the hardest with which philosophy has to grapple, and in the light of the category of evolution it has assumed new aspects of difficulty. Höffding's [1] suggestion that the solution, so far as it may be sought, is to regard "being as not ready-made, but as still incomplete, and rather to be conceived as continual, becoming like individual personality and knowledge," does not seem to lessen the theoretical strain of the problem. Nor does his plea, on ethical ground, for the relativity of being afford any relief. "If being were finished," he says, "harmoniously and unchangeably, ethics would be impossible. All ethics demands that there be effort. But there would be no room for effort if everything were in eternal and actual completeness." Undoubtedly there is here an aspect of ethics which cannot be dispensed with. It is fully recognised by idealist writers like Royce and Eucken, *e.g.*, who lay stress on the moral life as one of effort and achievement. The difficulty is that the element of effort and progressive attainment may be so emphasised as to rule out the thought of the absolute ethical values which give man his ideal. The difficulty is but an aspect of

[1] *The Problems of Philosophy*, pp. 120, 151.

the problem of the relation of the necessary to the contingent. "How can a God," asks a recent writer, "who is in dynamic relation to the world and who is involved in the processes of change and growth, remain unaffected by such processes?" Hard as the question is, the answer of apologetics must be that to involve God in the processes, without due emphasis on the fact of transcendence, is to be brought face to face with a situation the theoretical difficulties of which are overwhelming. The Design Argument may have all the flaws which its critics impute to it, yet, arising in pre-evolution days, it had at its centre the aim to read the contingency and change in nature in the light of a principle adequate to account for them. And it is to be noted that the rejection of the Design Argument in its traditional form is not always equivalent to the denial of a teleological interpretation of nature. This would seem to be Mr A. E. Taylor's position.[1] "This is quite consistent with our view that all real processes are teleological in the sense of being marked by subjective interest." The point would seem to be that the idea of teleology is wider, and theoretically more acceptable, than that of mere design. And there are minds for which even the Kantian objection that the argument only gives us an architect of the world, deprives it neither of theoretical worth nor religious impressiveness. Take, for example, these words from Hutchison Stirling: "Then as regards the objection that we can infer no more than an architect or an artificer, and that too only in the relative proportion, I fancy

[1] See Mr Taylor's whole section on the "Proof," *Elements of Metaphysics*, pp. 400–407.

the answer will be in every mouth. It is precisely an architect or artificer that we do infer, and precisely also in proportion of the work; but just in proportion of the work that architect or that artificer must be, and can only be, He that is; and whom there is none other beside, Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."[1]

The situation presented by the ontological argument is perhaps the most interesting, since it has always been recognised that the other two arguments lead back to and depend upon it. If the way from thought to being, from experience to reality, is closed, then indeed the case is serious so far as any support that religion may seek in theory is concerned. The ontological argument has been described as "the leap from idea to reality"—a leap that "constitutes the essential historic movement of the mind to God." And many who have been willing to admit the force of the Kantian criticism, within its limits, have felt that the argument has wider bearings. Kant's contention that if existence be taken to mean existence in space and time, it is inadmissible to conclude from the possession of an idea to the existence of an object corresponding to it, is one the weight of which is immediately felt. The argument about the hundred dollars holds. All ideas do not involve existence. But if we take the argument as declaring, in Mr A. E. Taylor's words, that "reality and meaning for a subject mutually imply one another," and that "every thought means something beyond its own existence," then significance will attach to the nature of the thought or idea for which objective reference is claimed. Of course "all thoughts are not equally

[1] *Philosophy and Theology*, p. 304.

true and significant. But the thought of reality must have a supreme place in the scale. It is, as Taylor says, one of the "significant thoughts" that give us "genuine knowledge." He holds that reality as a perfect individual is involved in our thought of it, if that thought be coherent and harmonious. We may not say, it is added, that this reality is God, unless we are prepared to hold that by the term God we mean the Absolute. If we mean by the term anything less than the Absolute, then "the ontological proof loses its cogency." It would not hold, for example, for the doctrine of a "finite" God. But, since Christian apologetics must hold that God is Absolute, the deeper bearing of the ontological argument becomes of great value. It is this wider reference of the argument that idealist thought has laid hold of. As it has been argued,[1] the ontological argument is the "report of experience." The other arguments proceed from the world to God—taking up the position that because the world is, God is. But it is because the world fails to satisfy us that we turn inwards and "grope for a deeper foundation." By virtue of the ontological line of argument we can say, "I have an idea of God, therefore I have an experience of God."

When we review the proofs, then, apart from the consideration of them as propositions calculated to compel the assent of the normal intelligence, and regard them as so many efforts to account for experience, their interest is of a high order. Adding what are known as the argument from history—the argument *consensus omnium*—and the moral argu-

[1] Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, 301 ff., 568 ff.

ment to the three we have been considering, we are presented with a historic and impressive attempt to justify the three interests of life—the theoretic, the practical, and the emotional. At first sight, indeed, we seem to find no place in the arguments for the elements on which, as we saw, Troeltsch lays such stress, the "personal decision" and "personal intuition," which are so decisive in the adoption of that attitude to the universe which may be described as "prophetic Christian Theism." There seems to be no place for volition when the mind is on the wheel of logic. But looking beyond the scholastic form of the arguments, they are found to represent so many personal reactions of man on his environment, natural and spiritual, and it cannot be supposed that from these the element of personal decision and personal intuition is absent. The reasonableness, therefore, of the Christian conception of God can never be shown to be a conclusion to which men are driven by logical compulsion. Views of life that would shatter the conception, or seriously modify it, may be examined by apologetics and shown to be wanting in theoretic consistency or ethical inspiration; on the positive side weighty considerations may be urged in favour of the conviction that reality is the God of righteousness, love, and redemption revealed by Jesus Christ; but the most brilliant defence and the most brilliant positive contribution alike must await that personal response which determines finally a man's attitude to life and God.[1]

[1] See Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 26. "Philosophy, in a sense, I should say, must depend on faith. For we do not rest simply on a datum. On the contrary, we may be said to depend on a principle of action. We seek, that is, a certain kind of satisfaction, and we proceed accordingly."

The theistic arguments are efforts to reach and realise a God who is absolute, who is personality, who is love. The argument from history may be taken to include the appeal of the character and work of Jesus, and the appeal also of the centuries of Christian life and experience. Yet, as Professor Adams Brown has said, the whole argument for the Christian conception of God may fail, both on its philosophic side and on its more intimate religious side, because, first of all, there are those who deny that it is right "to use the highest we know to interpret the universe"; and, again, because of those who "deny that Christ is the highest."[1] That is so, and it lies in the nature of the case. And perhaps, after all, it is a consideration of no small apologetic value that Christianity should, and indeed must, run this risk in our modern world. It is a tribute to the intensely personal, practical, and vital character of its appeal. Christianity would be something other and less than it is were it to rely on any authority beyond itself, or depend on any recommendation other than is to be found in the gift of God it bestows upon men, and in the adequacy with which its claim on man's devotion and service meets the needs of life. "Christianity establishes itself in its true home like a conqueror of the world" (Dilthey). The ideas of home and conquest are not usually set thus together. But as regards Christianity and its appeal, their friendship is fitting and indeed inevitable. If Christianity will not compel assent in a world of free men—who must win their moral emancipation through freedom or miss it altogether—but will seek

[1] *Christian Theology in Outline*, p. 137.

only to gain its response by means of love, then its conquest is a conquest indeed, honourable alike to victor and vanquished. For it enters the house of life as a conqueror only as it is admitted as a friend, to a house which is really a home. "Lo, I stand at the door and knock ; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with Me. The conqueror I will allow to sit beside Me on My throne, as I Myself have conquered and sat down beside My Father on His throne" (Rev. iii. 20, 21, Moffatt's translation).

CHAPTER VII

DIVINE ATTRIBUTES: TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE

In philosophy we come on the distinction between what is known as the "that" and the "what"—the question as to the "that" having reference to the mere existence of the object; and the question as to the "what" having reference to its nature, qualities, or attributes. The distinction may have a certain logical justification, but in reality it is one we cannot maintain.[1] In a sense, no doubt, it is true that there is a "that" behind every "what," for knowledge is never complete; but it can only interest us as the object of possible knowledge, and even that interest has a knowledge element in it. The "that" as a bare substratum of qualities, or thing in itself concealed behind phenomena, is unrelated to experience; it is for us nothing apart from the "what." This is equivalent to saying, as it has been put by an interpreter of Kant, that "the reality we know is a known reality: that knowledge is a growth in the knower and not an accidental product due to things otherwise unknown. The predicate 'is' is contained in the predicate 'is known.'" And so it is held that while "by appearance the world understands 'sham' . . . by appearance Kant understood a reality which has

[1] *Cf.* Taylor's *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 404, note.

appeared; or, as that is going too far, a something which is real so far as it goes."[1] In this sense theology may freely accept what is called the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge, though, as Wallace reminds us, there is no "absolutely catholic acceptation" of that "unhappy phrase." If it meant that we can never know reality but only phenomena, because for reality to become known is to be transmuted into something less, then the doctrine would be valueless for theology. But if it means that the knowledge of things "states their relations," and that "of essentially unrelated and absolutely isolated being our knowledge is and must be nil," and, further, that "knowledge is relative to the recipient," and to "ages and circumstances," and "grows from period to period," then the whole history of theology is its illustration. In this sense room may be found in the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge for revelation, and for the growth and deepening of religious experience. To discuss, then, the question of God's existence is to discuss the question of His nature and attributes. The traditional proofs for the being of God are all, as we have seen, so many efforts to interpret certain experiences; they deal with a reality which has come into relation to the mind, imagination, and conscience of man. And even though we regard the proofs as lacking in convincing quality—while admitting their high interest and value—and attempt on a broader ground to exhibit the ontological value of religion, it is still not merely the reality of God we seek to deal with but that reality as it comes into relation to man's life and attests itself in his experience. The question is,

[1] Wallace, *Logic of Hegel, Prolegomena*, p. 104.

What is implied in religious experience? The religious consciousness and its contents confront us, challenging us to find some worthy ground for their existence. In the nature of the case strict proof is not possible, yet the very absence of the conditions of such a proof only makes the problem greater and more impressive. We are impelled not merely along the way of logic, but by demands that come out of what is deepest in life to seek a ground and sufficient reason for the experience. For religion the question which philosophy expresses in the form, "What is reality?" becomes, What is the character, and what are the attributes of God? and religion is interested in the answer to the philosophic question in so far as it bears upon and affects the second. If the answer to the former question be such as Naturalism, *e.g.*, presents, then religion must enter its protest in the name of certain supreme life values that are threatened. The case would be similar with the answer that reality is blind will or energy. The only answer to the first form of the question that religion in its higher forms finds tolerable is that which thinks of reality as self-conscious will, for it is on that basis that theology can work out its doctrine of the divine attributes in personal, and therefore ethical and religious, terms.[1] The idea is not that religion apprehends in a figurative, pictorial, popular way what philosophy conceives with greater adequacy and fidelity. Rather, as certain philosophers are ready to grant, the knowledge which religion possesses is of the fuller and more concrete quality. If, with Mr A. E. Taylor, *e.g.*, we find a place for purpose in our conception of reality, and, further, regard this

[1] *Cf.* Galloway, *The Philosophy of Religion*, p. 395 ff.

purpose in an ethical way, since the recognition of it is the condition of the fulfilment of all purposes, then the way seems open to say that "the most adequate analogue to such a life will probably be found in the combination of direct insight and satisfied feeling which is experienced in the establishment of intimate and intelligent love among persons. The insight of love may be called knowledge, but it is knowledge of quite another type than the hypothetical universals of science."[1] Indeed, one of the most valid objections to the proofs—the point has been touched on—is that in proving too much they do not really prove enough. This is equivalent to saying that they are too general and abstract. "The inference from the world to God," as it has been put, "would be equally good in Heaven or in Hell."[2] But theology, in its doctrine of the divine attributes, and, in particular, as it passes from the "metaphysical" attributes to the ethical, would become more and more concrete, finding in the attributes a pledge of personal relations.

The presentation of the doctrine of God, then, might be completed in a doctrine of the divine attributes. For such a doctrine would include an account of the growth of the idea of God, or, from another point of view, an account of revelation; it would deal with the question of changing conceptions of God, and of the emphasising at certain periods of some aspects of the divine character to the exclusion or depression of others, and, in treating of God's relation to the world and to the time series and to man's life, it would have in its hand

[1] *Elements of Metaphysics*, pp. 61, 62.
[2] Schiller, *Humanism*, p. 82.

all the problems that present themselves to apologetics. The doctrine of the attributes might be said to be the doctrine of what is known of God through His communion with men ; it is a report of experience. We are indebted to Ritschl for recalling theology from discussion of a scholastic character to the need to start from the fundamental thought of faith, viz., that God is love.[1] He would have us ask what is involved in this most characteristic Christian thought of God. It implies, since love is spiritual personal will, the Personality of God, and affords us a principle for the interpretation of the world and man's life. For the object of divine love is not the world of nature but of spiritual beings, and, indeed, of such beings considered not as a mere multitude, but as forming the kingdom of God, *i.e.*, capable of realising the kingdom and of devoting themselves to the highest ethical ends. The thought that God is love carries with it also the conviction that God can achieve His purpose of love, *i.e.*, that His is the Will supremely effective in the world. Since the realising of the kingdom is the end God sets before Himself, we think of the world of nature as the means to this end, and therefore of God as the All-Mighty Creator. By virtue also of this basal thought of God we affirm His eternity, since, in controlling all things for the realising of His kingdom, He sees the end from the beginning. In Ritschl, indeed, in the thought of God as love, we find a solution of the problem of existence which has theoretical as well as religious

[1] See Kaftan's *Dogmatik*, p. 158 ff. *Cf.* the saying of Augustine that God's greatness is identical with His truth and His truth with His goodness.

value. It is the key which fits the lock. The metaphysical attributes are deduced from and explained in the light of the central Christian conviction regarding God. Not even from the thought of personality must we proceed in determining, so far as we may, the nature of God, but from the love which gives content to the personality and reveals its purpose. In writers like Häring and Kaftan we have the same spirit and method in the treatment of the attributes. Kaftan finds it useful to distinguish between the nature of God and the attributes. There is nothing, of course, in the distinction analogous to the scholastic distinction between the thing and its qualities. The nature of God is for Kaftan no mysterious substratum of which the attributes are phenomena. Rather, the predicates we affirm of the nature of God are such as we must always think when we think of God in terms of faith, *i.e.*, truly. Examples of these are personality and transcendence. On the other hand, there are predicates which denote certain relations of God which are not necessarily involved in every Christian thought of God. Yet Kaftan guards carefully against isolating any single attribute. God is one. And faith, so to speak, must be able to move freely among the attributes ; it must have a logic and inner harmony of its own and be able to make the transition from one attribute to another.[1] Kaftan's relation to Ritschl is seen when he comes to deal more specifically with the attributes. Love is placed first; the fundamental attributes of God are Love, Holiness, and Omnipotence. Love is the revelation of the

[1] See Kaftan's *Dogmatik*, pp. 159, 160. See also the detailed treatment, pp. 179–189.

very inner nature of God ; the predicate of power expresses His relation to the world. The different terms used here, however, do not mean that Kaftan regards power as in any sense a less real attribute than love. No support is given to the view that since God could exist without the world, and since His omnipotence is only known through the world, therefore it is not an essential attribute. This ingenious, if somewhat futile, speculation has no interest for a writer like Kaftan. He holds that while we must emphasise the divine transcendence, we cannot, on the other hand, think of God without the world, and thus we must regard omnipotence as an indispensable attribute. As regards love, of course, the greatest stress is laid on revelation. It is the acknowledgment of this which distinguishes the experience bound up with Christian faith from Mysticism, giving a content and stability to the former which the latter does not possess. Love and power, then, are the fundamental elements in the Christian thought of God. And this love is further exhibited as holy love, since it is a love which would bestow on men the highest good, and is therefore through and through ethically determined. It is not a love in the ecstatic contemplation of which a mystical sense of blessedness is attained, but a love which implies a kingdom of righteousness, in the service of which man realises his true life. The kingdom, which is the gift of God's love, is a righteous kingdom, and it is in the service of that kingdom, in the activity of the moral life as a life of faith that worketh by love, that the love of God becomes real to men and becomes their steadfast possession. Yet, notwithstanding the distinction

between the nature of God and the attributes of God, Kaftan insists that the knowledge of the attributes is nothing else than the knowledge of the nature. The attributes are but the product of the more intimate definition of the nature. By the attributes we know the nature, and by the nature the attributes.

Häring[1] also puts love in the foremost place, dealing first of all with the attributes of Holy Love and then with the attributes of Absolute Personality. And for Häring also, while we must recognise the unknown in the divine nature, we are not entitled to speak of the unknowable. The attributes are revelations of the nature and real expressions of the character. Häring insists on their objective reference. They are not, as with Schleiermacher, so many modes of the feeling of absolute dependence, sentiments of piety regarding a God whom we shrink from conceiving of in terms of will, and whose personality therefore—since we remain in the indeterminate region of feeling—is not clearly affirmed. Nor can Christian theology regard with any hopefulness the view that since God is pure being He cannot be said to possess attributes, save in so far as that speculation would seek in its own way to safeguard the unity of God. Kaftan has noted the danger of presenting the doctrine of the attributes as a mere catalogue of divine qualities, in which the tendency to refinement of distinction is indulged, and vain repetition not always successfully avoided. By this mode of treatment, undoubtedly, the fundamental truth about God may be obscured. But relief from the danger is not found in the mystico-

[1] *The Christian Faith*, pp. 485–504.

speculative attempt to get beyond the region of predicates altogether, but rather in the conviction of Christian faith that God reveals Himself, and that the very opulence of the revelation bears witness to the reality of the One Supreme Life. For Häring, then, the attributes are modes of activity, and, indeed, modes of activity of God's holy love. But, since in Häring's view Divine Love presupposes Absolute Personality, a distinction is made between the attributes of Love and those of Absolute Personality. The former are Goodness, Long-suffering and Faithfulness, Grace and Compassion, Wrath of God, Righteousness, Wisdom ; the latter, Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence, and Eternity. Häring is able to speak of the wrath of God because of his definition of the love as holy love. The thought is fundamentally the same as Kaftan's. The end of man being ethical, the activity of the will is presupposed, and the possibility also of a deliberate effort to oppose the aims of the kingdom of God. Hence we may speak in a very real sense of the wrath of God—though, of course, all analogies drawn from human experience are imperfect—rather than of God's attitude to sin as the inevitable reaction of love against what is evil. Häring recognises the difficulty involved in the use of the expression, and the opportunity it affords to minds of a certain type to think unworthily of God. He pleads for "reverent reserve" in the use of the phrase. Nevertheless, with Mr Balfour, *e.g.*, he cannot surrender the thought of a God who "takes sides," and in whom the passion for righteousness—if we are to attach any meaning to the words at all—implies a veritable wrath of God revealed from heaven against

all unrighteousness of men. The New Testament gives us a great and unforgettable word on the matter —"the wrath of the Lamb." Characters of special strength and fineness of texture do exhibit an indignation which, we are made to feel—even when, perchance, we are exposed to its heat—is the near and sure ally of compassionate love. Indeed, may it not be said that the love that glows at the heart of a true moral indignation is precisely the love for which sacrifice and atonement are not only possible but inevitable, with that higher inevitableness which can only be found in a world of freedom, where moral issues are at stake. The metaphysical attributes Häring construes in the interest of the ethical. A holy love, whose end is the kingdom of God, must be effective; it must have the "power of achievement." But the omnipotence of God must be construed as the omnipotence of love. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his Hands . . . took a towel and girded Himself." Here, in the judgment of Christian faith—which would read the meaning of life in the light of Christ—we have the contrast presented to us in its religious aspect, which philosophy knows in its dealing with the relation of the necessary to the contingent. In dealing with free men, the All-Mighty Love stoops to service and wins allegiance by sacrifice—the only victory conceivably worthy of such love. The problem presents itself to Häring in his treatment of the attribute of eternity. The relation of a love that is all-powerful to wills that nevertheless may resist its appeal may be considered in the light of—or, perhaps, one ought to say, under the shadow of—the time-honoured

problem of the relation of eternity to time; or, as Dr Galloway states it, "the relation of God the Ultimate Ground to experience regarded as a constantly developing process."[1] Mr Bosanquet deals with the subject in his well-known chapter entitled "The Gates of the Future." "A complete philosophy must satisfy both the demand for progress in the finite and that of an eternally realised perfection. It seems clear that a series may be a necessary element of a whole, which can never as such be expressed in a series; but that if the whole is a series and no more, perfection is by the hypothesis excluded."[2] This would seem to grant the reality of time, or, at any rate, a "degree" of reality to time, since the series is declared to be a "necessary element" of the whole. On the other hand, the statement that the whole "as such" can never be expressed in a series, however justifiable on philosophical grounds, creates embarrassments for theology in its doctrine of revelation, and particularly as regards the assertion it would make that there is a full disclosure of God's love in Jesus Christ. The difficulty has wide bearings. The whole attitude of Troeltsch and his school, *e.g.*, toward the question of the "absoluteness" of Christianity, may be said to be the outcome of the acceptance of the principle laid down by Mr Bosanquet that the whole can never as such be expressed in a series. Christianity is the supreme religion so far, but absoluteness in the strictly absolute sense cannot be claimed for it. It might be pointed out, also, that the Kenotic

[1] *The Philosophy of Religion*, p. 442.
[2] *Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. xxxi. See the discussion developed in Lecture X.

theories are efforts to relieve the pressure of the same problem. Häring admits that he has no new solution to offer, and indeed disclaims the idea of a solution. An exposition of Christian faith can neither deny the reality of time nor identify God with the time series. We must adopt "an entirely different attitude" to the problem, *i.e.*, acknowledge that we are here face to face with the problem of our finite existence, and that it is beyond us. "I know what time is," said Augustine, "if no one asks me; if I wish to explain it to an inquirer, I know not what it is."[1] With regard to the relation of eternity to time we must walk by faith. Faith "does not accept this limit to its knowledge as if making a virtue of necessity, but honours it as being necessary and self-evident in the light of that conception of Divine Revelation which faith adopts."[2]

Enough, perhaps, has been said to show that, even in the hands of writers who keep the practical religious interest in the foreground, the doctrine of the attributes lends itself easily to discussions which lead into almost every field of theology. For this reason a recent writer has said that "no part of theology is more unsatisfactory to the student than this. In place of a clear and simple statement of the Christian idea of God he finds himself plunged into a maze of philosophical and theological distinctions in which all unity and consistency are lost."[3] If something of this feeling of unsatisfactoriness is created by a study of the more recent

[1] Quoted by Häring, *The Christian Faith*, p. 509.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 510.
[3] Adams Brown, *Christian Theology in Outline*, p. 96.

and simplified forms of the doctrine, it will certainly not be lessened if the student turns to the older and more scholastic treatment. The discussion of the attributes in the older theology gave occasion for the elaborating of philosophic systems regarding God's nature and His relation to the world and man. Thus the Areopagite, in his derivation of the attributes, expounded his doctrine of the three ways of attaining a knowledge of God—the *viæ negationis*, *eminentiæ* and *causalitatis*. Everything finite is denied of God ; all perfections are affirmed of Him ; from the world as created we rise to the thought of a Creator. There are thus positive and negative attributes, absolute and relative ; attributes which have reference to God Himself, apart from any relation to the world, such as spirituality, incorporeity, invisibility, simplicity, immutability, and attributes which relate to God's action on nature and man, as, *e.g.*, omnipotence, goodness, compassion, justice, omnipresence, etc. In a third class were sometimes put the attributes of perfection, majesty, blessedness. Endless discussion arose regarding methods of classification, and results were arrived at, after keen controversy, which we cannot feel to-day to possess much if any importance. It is impossible to feel any real interest, *e.g.*, in the question of the distinction between God's immensity and omnipresence, or to feel that any real issue is at stake in the claim that incomprehensibility should be included in the attributes. Even so recent a writer as Dorner shows himself standing in the line of the philosophic tradition, though, of course, it is true that Dorner attaches a value to history and to religious experience which the older speculation did

not display. In deriving the attributes, Dorner considers the three "moments"—the ontological, the cosmological, and the physico-theological. It is necessary to think of God as existing and as the Absolute. Hence we have the attributes of unity, simplicity, and infinity, which last, when viewed in relation to the world, may be regarded as eternity and omnipresence. The cosmological moment yields us the thought of God as Absolute Life, a thought which, relating itself to the third moment, gives us God as the principle of the order, harmony, and beauty of the world. God is therefore Spirit, for whom all natural things are but means. So the way is opened up to derive the moral attributes, and finally to conceive of God as the three-one God, the absolute personality, the holy love, in whom wisdom, freedom, and blessedness are united. Dorner meets with strong opposition the view that the distinction between the divine attributes is merely subjective. One can see how this view arose on the basis of Neoplatonic thought, and how it could not but be strengthened by the use of the speculative method. The discovery of endless shades of distinction could not but lead to the opinion that such subtle work was but the product of intellectual ingenuity. Nevertheless, Dorner is in line with a constructive theology in asserting that "the differences between the divine attributes have an objective significance,"[1] while emphasing at the same time their essential unity. It is impossible, indeed, to claim an objective significance for all the subtle distinctions of scholastic thought, but if the doctrine of the attributes is kept, as recent theology is careful

[1] *System of Christian Doctrine*, vol. i. p. 200.

to do, under the governing thought of revelation, and if the religious interest is made central, then the question of the objective significance of the attributes is but part of the wider question regarding the objective reference of religious experience.

The voice of Modernism, in its attack upon this whole department of theological activity, is heard in William James's well-known chapter on "Philosophy" in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*. In James's opinion theology fails as completely to define God's attributes as to establish His existence. And, after a brilliant and biting sketch of the efforts of theology in this direction, efforts the outcome of which is described as a "scholastic inventory of God's perfections," the conclusion is reached that "even though these attributes were faultlessly deduced, I cannot conceive of its being of the smallest consequence to us religiously that any of them should be true." Judged by a pragmatic standard the metaphysical attributes, even if demonstrated by a "coercive logic," are "destitute of all intelligible significance." They yield neither comfort nor inspiration nor guidance to men ; they do not enter into "any definite relation with our life." And, since they call for no "distinctive adaptation of our conduct," it matters nothing to a man's religion whether they be true or false. What theology calls a deduction of the divine attributes is but a "shuffling and matching of pedantic dictionary adjectives, aloof from morals, aloof from human need, something that might be worked out from the mere word 'God' by one of those logical machines of wood and brass which recent ingenuity has contrived, as well as by a man of flesh and blood.

They have the trail of the serpent over them. . . . Instead of bread we have a stone ; instead of a fish, a serpent."[1] It must be admitted, as we have shown above, that there is an element of truth in these vigorous and vehement strictures, though, as we have seen, they are much more relevant to the older theology than to the more recent. Indeed, present-day theology is quite alive to the danger, and feels with James that religion cannot be "kept going" by "abstract definitions and systems of concatenated adjectives." "We gain our knowledge of the attributes," writes Professor Adams Brown, "by analysing the idea of God which we have already won from the revelation in Christ ; and we arrange them in such a way as to bring the distinctive features of that idea to clearest expression."[2] If theology is in earnest in exhibiting the content of the Christian idea of God, it will run little danger of being involved in the pedantries and subtleties which James so unsparingly condemns. Of more interest, however, as indicative of a characteristic modern frame of mind, is James's attitude to the moral attributes. The metaphysical attributes, as we have seen, possess neither pragmatic value nor theoretical justification. It is different with the moral attributes. James grants that these would have a bearing on our life, and would affect conduct if they were veritable determinations of reality. God's holiness, *e.g.*, His omnipotence and omniscience, His love, His purpose in creation to manifest His glory—these would have definite relation to our practical life if theology could make out a

[1] *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 440.
[2] *Christian Theology in Outline*, p. 101.

case for them. "But, verily, how stands it with the arguments? It stands with them as ill as with the arguments for God's existence." The point seems to be that, the objective reference of these attributes being granted, we have a Theism. But, as James points out, "Post-Kantian idealists reject" these attributes "root and branch," and the inference would seem to be that the rejection of determinations of reality which carry with them the affirmation of God as Absolute Personality throws the whole theistic position into uncertainty. The final conclusion, therefore, for the "perplexed and baffled" intellect is to acknowledge its impotence. Religion means only having "a trustful sense of a presence." We must, therefore, says James, "bid a definite good-bye to dogmatic theology. . . . Modern Idealism has said good-bye to this theology for ever." But theology is not quite so easily dismissed, even if we admit, which many will refuse to do, that modern Idealism endorses Pragmatism's farewell. Even that vague phrase, "a trustful sense of a presence," carries with it a weight of suggestion and of objective reference which theology cannot disregard. For it speaks of faith, and of a reality which appeals to faith and to which faith responds, and of man's capacity to realise that his experience is continuous with some wider realm of being which is not alien to him. Unless we are to remain entirely in the domain of vague feeling, and neglect the gifts of history, even that confession of Pragmatism summons us to define with what clearness is attainable an experience that plainly challenges the mind. There will ever be, then, in any effort to explain religion a place for a doctrine of the attri-

butes, even though it be called by another name. It need not be an exercise in scholastics ; it must be an effort to render intelligible the ways in which the divine life touches and inspires the life of man.

And even with a statement so general, and, it may be granted, so vague as this, we are within sight of the doctrine with the discussion of which theology is accustomed to complete its treatment of the Christian idea of God—the doctrine of the Trinity. For, if we take that doctrine quite simply and practically, what is it but an effort of the Christian mind to interpret the ways by which God comes near to men—on the plane of historical life and in the depths and intimacies of personal experience ? The doctrine of the divine attributes was part of the same effort. The doctrine of the Trinity may be viewed as the Church's supreme declaration regarding the attributes. God is love and life, with all that these words involve as regards redemption and the progressive enrichment of Christian experience. In the fourth century the Church said, God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit are One God. It was the Church's way of saying in the language of the time, and using the intellectual categories of the time, what Paul had said when he declared that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and that the law of the spirit of life had made him free from the law of sin and death. It was the Church's way of saying, "Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life." We must not forget that the man who set the stamp of his genius on this famous doctrine, and who constructed what Harnack has called "the most immanent of immanent Trinities," was the author

of these words, "Human speech is in difficulties through its great poverty. We say three persons, not because we have found the right word, but because silence is worse."[1] And Principal Denney,[2] in presenting that "symbol of the Church's unity" which has aroused so much interest and discussion —"I believe in God through Jesus Christ His Only Son our Lord and Saviour"—reminds us that "the New Testament nowhere speaks of faith in the Holy Spirit," and that the confession "I believe in the Holy Ghost" is "entirely foreign to the New Testament." The remark is significant as showing with what freedom theology may advance from New Testament ground to consider later doctrinal constructions, and with what right it evaluates these in the light of the thought of their time and of the religious interests they were designed to secure, instead of being compelled to regard them as of binding and permanent authority for faith. "Even one," writes Dr Denney, "who has every disposition to make the most of traditional Christian thinking, and who heartily agrees that no one knows all that a Christian means by 'God' unless he includes in the term all that is meant by 'Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,' may be convinced that every Christian interest is secured by the simple confession suggested above."

Recent theology views the Trinitarian formula from the practical point of view and in strict relation to Christian experience. It is Kaftan's position,[3] *e.g.*, that, while neither the Old nor New Testament

[1] The saying is, of course, Augustine's, *De Trinitate*, v. 10.
[2] See *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 402.
[3] *Dogmatik*, p. 190 ff.

contains a doctrine of the Trinity in the traditional sense of the word, the New Testament gives a witness to faith of a self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ, and a self-communication of God to the Christian believer through the Spirit, which is the Spirit of God and of Christ. The Christian knowledge of God therefore presents itself as a knowledge of Father, Son, and Spirit, *i.e.*, as a knowledge of the three-one God, which formula is indispensable (*unentbehrlich*) above all in the interests of Monotheism. But the doctrine must be understood in conformity with Christian faith and in strict relation to the history, *i.e.*, to the revelation in Christ, and to experience, *i.e.*, to the gift of the Spirit to the believing community. The practical note is strong here. It is no less strong in Häring, though, to the surprise no doubt of some of his readers, Häring deals with the doctrine of the Trinity in the last section of all, that entitled "Eschatology," instead of at the close of that part of his work devoted to the doctrine of God. But he makes it clear that his attitude is very much the same as Kaftan's. In dealing with the subject under Eschatology Häring would, so to speak, acknowledge that the full understanding of it is postponed. There is that in the divine nature of which faith feels the force and the appeal, while the full disclosure must be transferred to the realm of hope. Yet Häring makes it clear that, so far as the practical bearing of the subject is concerned, he has said all he can say in his treatment of the revelation of God in Christ and of the communication of God through the Spirit. His position is thus summed up : "The revelation of God which is given in Jesus Christ is not a chance

and passing glimpse which may be superseded by another, but it is actually the full self-revelation of God, of Holy Love. And when God in Christ awakens in His Church and in each individual amongst us faith and personal trust in this love of His, that is actually personal spiritual communion with Himself." In these words Häring would express "the abiding sense of the traditional formula."[1]

There are, of course, attitudes toward the doctrine other than that just referred to. It has been held that the doctrine presents a mystery which faith must reverently acknowledge and accept, on the authority of the Church or of Scripture. On the other hand, theologians influenced by the Hegelian philosophy seek to rationalise the doctrine—using the word reason here in the speculative rather than in the *Aufklärung* sense. These efforts to rationalise the doctrine produce results which vary in their proximity to orthodox standards, according as the writers belong to the right or left wing of the Hegelian movement. The tendency to regard the doctrine as presenting a mystery for faith's acceptance was furthered by the work accomplished by the powerful genius of Augustine. Harnack, after noting that the Athanasian creed is "strictly Augustinian," remarks that "in the Athanasian creed as a creed we have the transformation of the doctrine of the Trinity, as an article of faith to be inwardly appropriated, into an ecclesiastical legal statute on the observance of which salvation depends."[2] It may seem strange that this should be the effect of

[1] *The Christian Faith*, p. 921.
[2] *History of Dogma*, iv. p. 136.

the labours of a man so intensely and characteristically religious as Augustine was. But it is to be remembered that Augustine never ceased to be the philosopher of the Neo-Platonic type. By destroying the last traces of subordination in the doctrine of the Trinity Augustine undoubtedly tended to sever Christian thought from history, and to transfer its activity to a realm of speculation where piety, if it be not lifted up by its own strength and fineness to something of mystical insight, is apt to become but the meek acceptance of a doctrine authoritatively guaranteed. The Augustinian doctrine ministered both to the power of the Church and to the passion of the mystic. It is not to be denied that with the fading of the historical interest—inevitable, perhaps, in a time when an old world was vanishing and the new was presenting itself in but vaguest and dimmest outline—the cause of piety was greatly served by the lofty and impassioned speculation of Augustine. Men who found it increasingly hard to find God on the highways of life had their thought lifted up to the eternal heights, to that unchanging city of God where the soul's true home and rest are to be sought. The highways were exalted. For this severance from history, no doubt, a price had to be paid, and was paid. But it may be said that even during the Middle Ages, although Christ was taken up into the mount of speculation, when He was set His disciples came unto Him. In the joyous fervour of a St Francis and the ecstatic devotions of a St Bernard, the mountains of speculation became again a way of evangelic service.

The doctrinal displacement at the time of the

Reformation did not affect the position of the Trinitarian formula save in this respect, that it was accepted on the authority of Scripture instead of on that of the Church. "The principle of authority," it has been said, "was as mediæval in historic Protestantism as in Catholicism, and it was only lack of historical imagination which for so long prevented Protestantism from realising the fact."[1] The view that the function of Scripture is to communicate doctrine is one to which theology no longer adheres. But it has been widely held that, accepting the principle of development in revelation, we have even in the Old Testament traces or hints of Trinitarian doctrine, promises, so to speak, which are so abundantly fulfilled in the New Testament that it can be said that Scripture provides an adequate basis for the fully articulated doctrine. As regards the Old Testament, reference is made to the distinction between God and His creative word, to the Angel of Jahveh, and to the wonderful passage in Proverbs viii. 22–31 where Wisdom is presented to the imagination as a veritable co-worker with God. Kaftan puts this line of argument aside, rather bluntly, with the remark that we have no material in the Old Testament to warrant the assertion that the beginnings of a doctrine of the Trinity are to be found in its pages. And a Scottish theologian has written: "We hear it said sometimes in regard to such passages as that in Gen. i. 26, 'Let us make man'; or Isa. vi. 8, 'Who will go for us?' that there is there a vague or obscure intimation of the doctrine of the Trinity. Now this is unfortunate language. It is unhappily the case that there are many passages of the Old Testament

[1] M'Giffert, *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas*, p. 283.

which we must call obscure ; that is, we are unable to say whether this, or that, or some other thing be the meaning. But we never have any doubt that they have some one perfectly clear sense, if we had the means of reaching it. They are not vague in themselves. There is no vagueness or obscurity in either of the passages referred to. If God, who speaks in these passages, uses the word *us* of Himself, there is a perfectly clear statement to the effect that the Godhead is a plurality—whether that plurality be a duality or a trinity, or some other number is spoken of. But so far the sense has no vagueness or obscurity. The point, however, is whether the Divine Speaker uses the word *us* of Himself, *i.e.*, of the Godhead alone, or whether He does not include others, *e.g.*, His heavenly council along with Him. The opinion of most scholars is to the latter effect." [1] Not even in the New Testament will a writer like Kaftan [2] admit that we are furnished with material which, by any kind of inner logic of faith, necessitates the result of the later theological reflexion, and this too in full view of the fact that the New Testament speaks of the pre-existence of the Son, that it is fully conscious of a distinction between God and the Spirit of God, and that it contains the baptismal formula and the apostolic benediction in 2nd Corinthians xiii. 14. For the question, he urges, is not, Does Scripture contain that which, properly understood, leads to the Church doctrine of the Trinity ? but rather this, Does Scripture witness to a self-revelation of God which, when appropriated in faith, issues in a confession of the three-one God ? Kaftan would

[1] A. B. Davidson, *Old Testament Theology*, p. 129.
[2] See *Dogmatik*, p. 192 ff.

contend, one may say, for the supremacy of the New Testament. In the New Testament we have something greater and more valuable than the Church doctrine—the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the self-communication of God by the Spirit, *i.e.*, we have great facts of history and experience to which a doctrine constructed under the pressure of certain philosophic categories cannot do justice. An attitude not dissimilar to this is defined by Dr Denney in the following words: "To simplify the creed by omitting everything which can be verified in experience, and then to expect men to unite in the purely metaphysical proposition—for whatever religious interest it is supposed to guard, it is a purely metaphysical proposition—that Christ is consubstantial with the Father, is only to show that one has not diagnosed the situation at all. Very few people can tell what Athanasius and the Nicene bishops meant by the term. No one knows whether all who use it now use it in the same sense; or rather, it is as certain as anything can be that they do not. Everyone feels that it is on something else than the understanding of such metaphysical propositions that the life and union of Christians depend; and it is this something else, and not what one regards as the metaphysical basis or presupposition, which ought to find expression in the common Christian confession of faith."[1]

Some reference has already been made to the efforts of speculative Idealism to exhibit the rationality of the Trinitarian doctrine. In modern times these find their inspiration in the Hegelian philo-

[1] *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 392.

sophy, but the source of all such efforts is to be sought in Augustine, who, by his analysis of man's self-consciousness, endeavoured to find a basis for the interpretation of the divine. In memory, will, and intelligence Augustine found a trinity of self-manifestation, possible only because in each and all of these operations the one mind is present and active. Thus we have in the mind that which is in its essence one, a unity manifested in three diverse, though not separate, functions. Now, since man is made in God's image it is permissible to find in this self-consciousness of the individual, with its three modes of activity, an analogue of the divine life, even while we remember that that life must transcend in wealth of meaning our highest efforts toward interpretation. Thus we may speak of God the Father as manifesting the divine self-existence, of God the Son as expressing the divine wisdom, and of God the Spirit as revealing the divine love. These three are one. Speculation has always remained loyal to these thoughts. Hegel, who may not unfairly be described as the most anthropomorphic of thinkers,[1] would find in the dialectic process by which the mind attains to consistent and harmonious thinking the very secret by which the universe attains to or reveals its meaning. By thesis, antithesis, and synthesis mind progresses from what is bare, abstract, and one-sided to fullness and concreteness of content. From the intellectual point of view the mind may be said to be impelled forward

[1] *Cf.* Windleband's remark that Hegel's philosophy "lapses over into a completely anthropocentric speculation about the world, that is to say, it looks on the development of the human spirit as the development of the world spirit." Quoted by Ward, *Realm of Ends*, p. 178.

on its way by the inner logic of things, which is really the presence of the Absolute in life and history. The mind lives by dying to what is abstract. In the ethical regard, man lives by love, which is the reconcilement of all antagonisms, the principle that goes out seeking its "other," and rests not until the lost sheep is restored to the fold. The doctrine of the Trinity is used to illustrate and, indeed, to reveal the inner meaning of this structure of things as envisaged by Hegel. Just as the subject demands an object, and as mental life and progress depend on the union of these, so we cannot rest in the thought of God as the "abstract self-identical infinite" but as Spirit that goes out of itself seeking an object of thought and love in the Son. In the kingdom of the Spirit the unity is attained, or revealed, or manifested as the final triumph of the living principle implicit from the first in the very nature of Spirit. Theistic thinkers have drawn largely on the speculative scheme, and, with appropriate modifications, have utilised many of its elements in expounding their doctrine of God. Its attraction for Theism has always lain in the significance attached to the spiritual life, and in the claim that insight into that life is not denied. Here Theism has found an ally against Materialistic and Agnostic views. But, on the other hand, Theism has felt that the speculative construction, in failing to give full value to the element of personality, shares the defect of similar schemes of thought in all ages. The historical and experiential fall into the background. In regard to the effect of such thinking on the central Christian fact, the remark has been made, and theology feels its justification,

that "the person becomes less and less ; the speculative idea of his achievement more and more. The systematised statement of the manner in which an individual caused his career to epitomise 'the eternal circulation of the divine life' replaces the absolute significance of the vehicle of revelation."[1] There is a noteworthy observation by Eucken[2] that whereas the idea of God's personality becomes inadequate when expressed in a doctrinal form, when it is sought in the living process of religion itself it becomes "entirely obvious and indispensable." It is then an "intrinsic truth, above all anthropomorphism." The "colourless conception of the Godhead" is transformed into that of "a living personal God." Even when the speculative method is used strictly in the interest of a Christian Theism, as for example by Dr James Orr, statements emerge which belong rather to the realm of abstract propositions than to the direct interpretation of life. Thus we are required "to posit an immanent distinction in the Godhead, through which the divine consciousness carries its object within itself ; and this is neither an ideal, nor finite, nor impersonal object, but one in which God sees His own personal image perfectly expressed."[3] But religion may neglect the imposition of logical necessity and even question its inevitableness, without suffering any decline in fervour or loss of practical efficiency.

In addition to seeking light on the central Christian doctrine by a consideration of man's spiritual life,

[1] Wenley, *Contemporary Theology and Theism*, p. 65.
[2] *The Truth of Religion*, p. 430.
[3] Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 273 (6th ed.).

thought has turned its attention to the life of man in the community, in society, as affording an analogy of the inner distinctions and reciprocal relations of the divine life. Building on the Pauline basis that no man liveth unto himself, and that it is only in fellowship with his kind that the individual acquires an intellectual and ethical life of richness and worth, the effort has been made to show that in the life or spirit of the community, animating all the members and uniting them, yet greater than any individual or group of individuals, we may find ground for speaking of "social relations as belonging to the very essence of God." The work of Fairbairn and, more recently and particularly, of Royce is of special interest in connection with this line of speculation. Of the wider bearings of Royce's subtle and fascinating speculations this is not the place to speak. They exhibit a form of Absolutism, in which, while the greatest emphasis is laid on the moral significance and content of the conception of God, the relation of the Absolute Self to the selves can hardly be conceived of in harmony with the transcendence of the one or the freedom of the other. Although Royce speaks of the Absolute with true religious reverence as the God in whom we live and move and have our being, it is difficult to see how Christian faith can endorse that confession if the life we live in God be a species of Determinism. We are here far away from that Pauline conception of immanence, that indwelling grace, through which the sense of personality is won, and by virtue of which the apostle could say, "I am what I am." Professor Royce has written with noble fervour on loyalty as the supreme religious attitude, but loyalty even to the "Beloved

Community" must be subordinated by Christian faith to loyalty to One in and through whom the community exists. Royce's beloved community is an ideal; it is not yet the "present possession of humanity." Thus the call of the Church is, "Create me."[1] This, it may well be granted, is an inspiring call; from one point of view the Church is what the faith of its members make it. But man's final loyalty must not be bestowed on the work of his own hands, or even on the work of his own spirit, but reserved for the Reality to which he feels he owes his creation. Such observations indicate the line along which the conception of the Trinity as a society would be found lacking in genuine significance for faith. The charge of Tritheism has been brought against such speculations. It may be, as a recent writer has stated, that "probably some fresh thinking requires to be done in regard to Tritheism," but it is difficult to see how any thinking can bring it into relation to that Unity of God which is the fundamental truth of our religion. At the best a renewal of thought on this matter would seem to offer that conception of an underlying essence or being of which the three persons are alike manifestations, a conception which in Augustine was associated with a mode of thought which he sought, not always successfully, to transcend.

It is on the ground of history, and among the realities of the religious experience, and not in the regions of speculation, that the wealth of the divine nature is revealed to us. The Christian affirmation is not that it is our task to find God, but that we are found of Him; not that it is ours to explore,

[1] *The Nature of Christianity.*

with never such subtlety of thought, the nature of the divine, but that God has revealed Himself in love and grace in the Life that is central in history, and that, for those who yield the response of faith to the appeal of that life, there is the assurance that God has come near, an abiding Presence, to inspire and sustain man as he journeys forward.

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